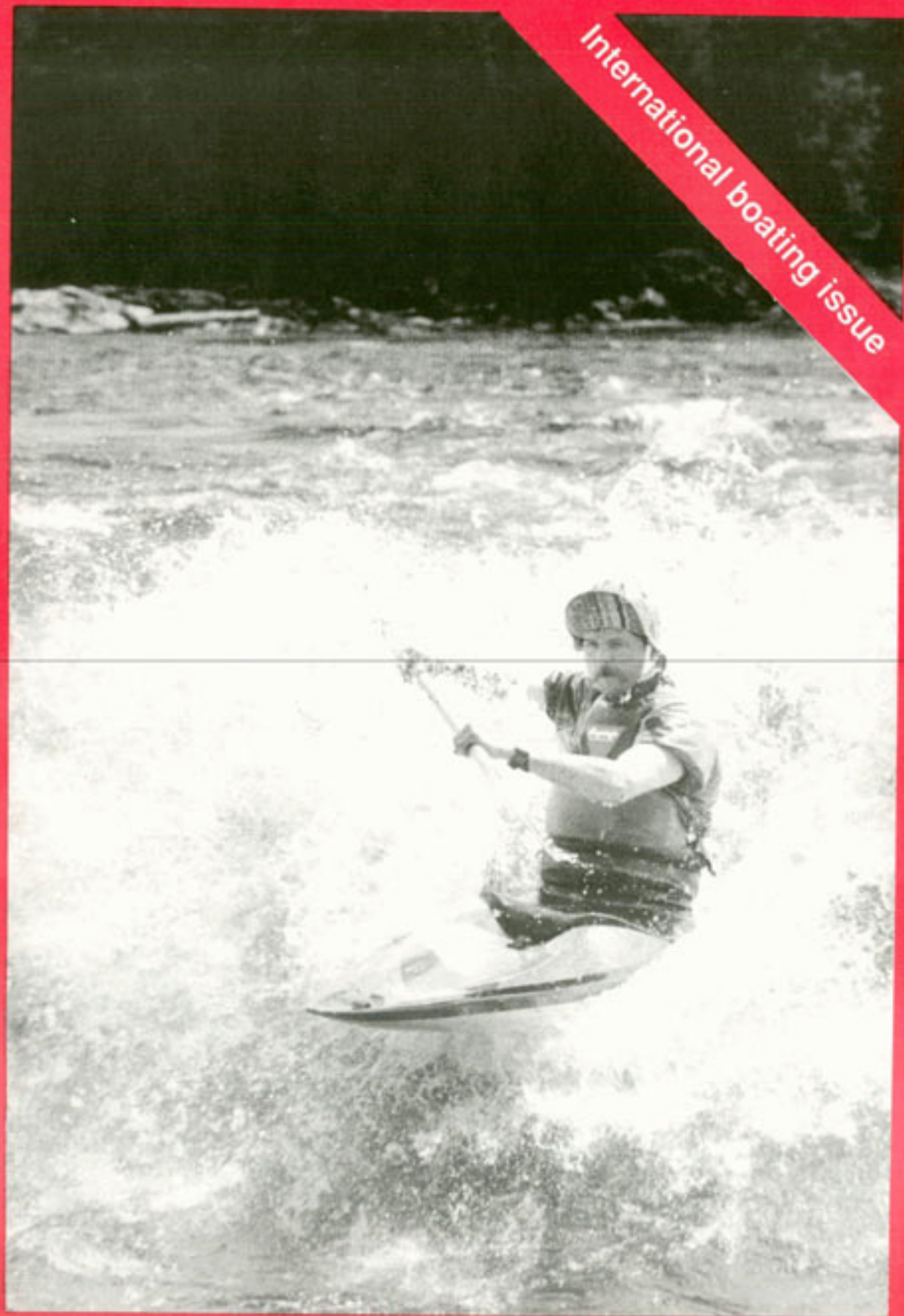


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JOURNAL OF THE
AMERICAN WHITEWATER
AFFILIATION

November/December 1989

Volume XXXIV, No. 6

features

Desktop Environmentalist

With a little help from MS DOS, Pete Skinner's monkey wrenching on behalf of whitewater has earned him the distinction of Perception's "1989 River Conservationist of the Year."

by Chris Koll

From Russia with Love

Perhaps a whitewater competition on an icy Siberian river could be termed a "cold war," but relations between competitors from different cultures was never warmer.

by Susan Norman

South American Smorgasboard

Chile offers snowbound North American paddlers a varied feast of whitewater.

by Joe Greiner

OOOH LA LA...French Alpine Rivers

Sure, maybe you can find water just as fabulous back in the States...but can West Virginia match France for food, wine and women?

by Dana Chalfont

Paddling the Frontier

A review of Wic Walker's epic whitewater tour book of Pakistan.

by Bob Gedekoh

departments

AWA Briefs

AWA sponsors Gauley Festival, Ocoee Rodeo; Riverfest donates grant to AWA; Zbell triumphs again

Conservation Currents

Protection sought for 12 WV rivers; AWA intervenes on Russell Fork; Salt Caves still lives; Great Falls permits required; AWA region directors sought

Safety Lines

Waist-belt an inexpensive but invaluable accessory

by Charlie Walbridge

AWA Directors Election


End Notes

The perils of paddling a boat nicknamed "the rainbow trout."

by Gary Carlson


Front cover: James Swedberg freezes
boater in the middle of a dynamic surf
on Canada's Ottawa River.

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editor's forum

A sad likeness

One year ago we ran an article entitled Appalachian Top Ten, outlining what we considered to be the cutting edge of eastern whitewater boating.

Sadly, since the publication of that article, there have been three deaths on these rivers.

In April Charley Deaton perished on West Virginia's Blackwater River after sustaining a head injury during a violent swim at relatively high water. Charley was a popular figure among West Virginian boaters, an amicable and gutsy gentleman of 59, who had returned to paddling after a bout with cancer.

Later this spring an experienced and knowledgeable rafter died on Maryland's Upper **Yough** after he was swept against an undercut rock at Lost and Found Rapid. The river was running 2.5 that day, considerably higher than the typical summer level.

And most recently, on the day after the Gauley Festival, John Dolbeare, a well-liked NOC employee, lost his life at the Home of Sweet Jesus on West Virginia's Lower Meadow. John and two other expert boaters were attempting to run the Meadow at 2400 cfs. The river had never been tackled at that level before.

The deaths have by no means been confined to our Top Ten streams. For instance, this summer Ken Kashuahara, a respected member of the KCCNY, drowned after attempting to run a low head dam on the Pequannock River in New Jersey at near flood stage.

There is a common denominator here. Rivers running high.

There is no question that Ken and John and Charley knew that they were paddling difficult and dangerous rapids at a high level. They all understood the risks and made informed decisions. They obviously thought the risks were worth taking.

Why?

Well, there aren't many first descents left in the East. It is not surprising that boaters are pushing the limits in other ways...ie. running rivers at high levels.

And I, for one, am in no position to condemn them. I've taken, and will probably continue to take, more than my share of chances. I like high water as much as anyone.

At least I used to.

But lately I've been thinking a lot about Ken and John and Charley.

Lately I've been thinking a lot about what it must have been like to call their families with the sad news.

Lately I've been thinking a lot about what sometimes happens...when rivers run high.

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WHAT IS THE AMERICAN WHITEWATER AFFILIATION?

The American **Whitewater** Affiliation (AWA) is a national organization with a membership of over **1300** whitewater boating enthusiasts and more than **50** local canoe club affiliates. The AWA was organized in **1961** to protect and enhance the recreational enjoyment of whitewater sports in America.

EDUCATION: Through publication of a bi-monthly **journal**, the AWA provides information and education about whitewater rivers, boating safety, technique, and equipment.

CONSERVATION: AWA maintains a national inventory of whitewater rivers, monitors potential threats to whitewater river resources through its "River Watch" system, publishes information on river conservation, works with government agencies to protect and preserve free-flowing whitewater rivers, and provides technical advice to local groups regarding river management and river conservation. AWA also gives annual awards to individuals to recognize exceptional contributions to river conservation and an annual "hydromania" award to recognize the proposed hydroelectric power project which would be most destructive of whitewater.

EVENTS: AWA organizes sporting events, contests and festivals to raise funds for river **conservation**. Since **1986**, AWA has been the principal sponsor of the annual Gauley River Festival in Summersville, West Virginia, the largest gathering of whitewater boaters in the nation, other than at international racing events.

SAFETY: **AWA** promotes paddling safety, publishes reports on whitewater accidents, and maintains both a uniform national ranking system for whitewater rivers (the International Scale of Whitewater Difficulty) and the internationally recognized AWA Safety Code.

ORGANIZATION AND PURPOSES: AWA was incorporated under Missouri non-profit corporation laws in **1961** and maintains its principal mailing address at **146 N. Brockway, Palatine Illinois, 60067**. AWA has been granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service under section **401(c)(3)** of the Internal Revenue Code of **1954**. The **charter** includes the following purposes: encourage the exploration, enjoyment, and preservation of **American** recreational waterways or man-powered craft; protect the wilderness character of waterways through conservation of water, forests, parks, wildlife, and related resources; promote appreciation for the recreational value of wilderness cruising and of white-water sports.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF: Except for membership services and the Executive Director **position**, all AWA operations, including publication of the bi-monthly magazine, are handled by volunteers.

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Sexist pig unmasked

To the Editor,

My non-kayaking friend, Nancy S., read the End Notes article entitled "Legitimate Whitewater Behavior" in the July/August issue. She found it offensive, exceedingly sexist and unfunny, going so far as to predict that you would receive many letters in protest. I, on the other hand, found its tongue-in-cheek wit very humorous and refreshing. Being a hard-boater I understand the feelings the author was trying to convey. I predicted that you would receive no more negative response than from any other published article.

Who is right?

Neil Rubin
Toledo, Ohio

Editors Reply: *Neil—although your letter is the only correspondence we've received regarding that particular End Notes, your friend Nancy S. is accurate in her assessment of author Gary Carlson: he is a sexist pig. Sometimes Gary seems to be more of a William Nealy character than a real person. He's a Neanderthal.*

So why, you might ask, do we print his mindless drivel in American Whitewater? For the same reason Nealy's cartoons are published. William often portrays paddlers as bearded ex-hippies—hardly an accurate depiction in this age when roof racks are found mounted on a BMW as often as a VW bus. But it's the image that counts: paddling seems to appeal to the counter-culture in all of us.

And as (much to my regret) boating is still a predominately male activity, boaters often revert to a locker room mentality characteristic of huntin' camps, sports teams and construction crews.

Inexcusable? Yes. But true? Again, yes. As a sensitive kind of guy, my only motive for running Gary's ramblings is that it holds up these ado-

lescent attitudes for public derision. That and the fact that he always meets deadlines.

C.K.

Inventory kudos

Dear Mr. Barrow,

The mailman delivered my copy of the National Whitewater Inventory about an hour ago and after looking it over I really like it. What a great idea. I think it will be very useful. If there are a few mistakes, who gives a? Its still an excellent source of information. You know that somebody will try to run everything listed. If I were fifteen years younger, had a fleet of boats, a fully-equipped mobile home (ie. shuttle vehicle in tow, wet bar and topless stewardesses) and was independently wealthy I'd try it myself. You and the many contributors did a good job. Thanks.

Mike Warren
(Montana's only C-1 paddler, I think)
Beartooth Paddler's Society

Editors note: *If I had a fully equipped mobile home/shuttle vehicle full of topless stewardesses, I'd try something too.*
RHG

Szilagy unloved

An open letter to Imre Szilagi, owner, Appalachian Wildwaters

Dear Imre,

I am writing to continue our discussion of September 8, 1989, at Sweet's Falls on the Gauley River. It was a brief conversation, made necessary by our respective position a few hundred feet apart on opposite sides of the river and many miles apart on opposite sides of a very sensitive issue.

The interplay consisted of three gestures: the first a sweep of my arm to indicate the obscene gash of rubble and tree stumps that your bulldozer created across a once beautiful hillside, the second an also obscene, but far less destructive and universally understood single digit expression of emotion originating from the depths of my soul, and the third, a casual wave from you that I felt captured your lack of concern perfectly.

I am not often given to such crude displays. I write so that I may explain in more civilized terms the reasons for my anger and dismay. I regret that we could not interact more fully at the time but I had been informed the previous evening that you would initiate court proceedings against any raft guide or guest who so much as set foot on "your" property who was not either an employee or paying for the privilege. I find neither condition acceptable.

Like countless other paddlers I view the Gauley as a very special river. I first made its acquaintance seven years ago as a commercial guest and have been under its spell ever since. No single quality sets it apart from other rivers, but its powerful rapids, breathtaking scenery, and remote inaccessibility combine for an effect unrivaled in the eastern U.S. After nearly 200 runs as a kayaker, canoeist, and professional raft guide the quality of the experience has never diminished...until now.

Those of us who embark on a trip down the Gauley have always done so with the understanding that we are leaving the "real" world behind. We pit our skills against the power of the river, knowing that evacuation and rescue are difficult. We accept and welcome this risk, anticipating rewards made sweeter by an environment little changed by the hands of man. It is true that loggers with saws and dynamite once came and left their mark, but nature has been busily reclaiming its own, and we were encouraged by an act of Congress that we hoped would protect this wonderful place for decades.

Sweet's Falls is an important landmark on any Gauley trip. Until now

letters

paddlers who occupied the ledges above this classic drop did so secure in the knowledge that we had completed the five most challenging rapids on the river. We could savor an experience that was far from over, for we were still deep in the canyon, out of the reach of outside influences. We could reflect on the events of the day, cheer our comrades over the drop, and anticipate the miles to go. Any who shared our physical vantage point shared the rest of our perspective, for the river was the only practical means of access.

All of this was clearly lost on you. I chose my profession as a river guide so that I might spend more time in the wild and share my love of rivers and all things natural with those who joined me in my raft and kayak clinics. I naively assumed that anyone who operated an outdoors oriented business had much the same motivation. Certainly there are easier ways to make a dollar than to own a raft company. It seems counterproductive to destroy the same environment through which you transport your guests.

The destruction caused by your bulldozer is unforgivable and the intrusion into what was once a special place is almost irretrievable, but the implications of this road are almost unthinkable. Your callous disregard of those who would preserve the wilderness qualities of the Gauley has been firmly established. I find it hard to believe that you slashed your way down to the river simply to deliver lunch to your customers and survey your holdings without getting your feet wet. Rumors abound of bleacher seats, admission tickets, and even condominiums. You yourself told me of plans for construction of a Gauley River Outdoor Center Complex. I assumed it would be out of sight of the river but I now fear the worst.

It is clear that you will do as you please unless forced to stop but I think it is important for you to realize that there are many who deplore your actions. I and those who signed petitions with me are but a few of the many river users who encourage you in the strongest possible terms to let the road

to Sweet's Falls return to seed and abandon any further plans for development within sight of the river. There are very few pieces of wilderness left in this world. Please **don't** take this one away.

Dave Bassage

Ocoee rodeo praise I

Dear Risa,

I'm just writing to let you know what a good time I had at the Ocoee Whitewater Rodeo. You did a wonderful job with the organization- great competition, judging, food, prizes, people- I'm already looking forward to next year! I know it must have been a challenge to put it all together so well, thanks for putting in all the time and effort.

Hope to see you on the river soon. I'm thinking about trying out some of the "squirt madness" that's going around- just what I need, another boat! Anyway, thanks again for a classic rodeo weekend.

Sincerely,
Lythia Metzmeier

Ocoee rodeo praise II

Dear Risa, (Shimoda Callaway, AWA Executive Director)

Thanks for having the Ocoee Rodeo. If not for you guys it never would have happened.

The prizes and the raffle were the best ever. Everybody had a great time. See you at the Gauley, if not before.

Your paddling buddy,
Francis



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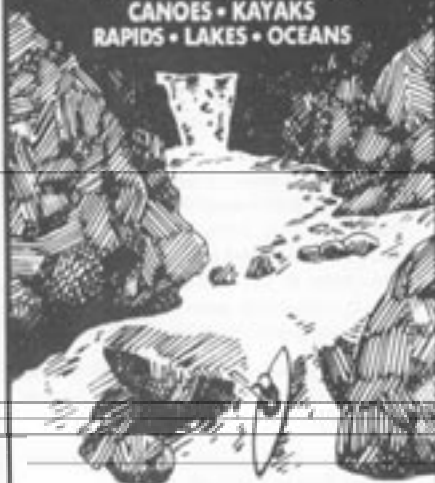
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letters

Safety update

To All Kayak and Canoe Clubs:

Hello, my name is Nancy Sklavos and I am, at present, the vice chairperson of the Kayak and Canoe Club of New York (KCCNY). My reason for writing you is this: with growing concerns in the area of safety, we at KCCNY are most interested in updating our information files. Therefore, we are writing to all Kayak and Canoe Clubs for assistance.

We would like to know what type of safety practices your club is using at the present time. Do you have safety handbooks or literature for your association? If so, would it be possible for us to get a copy. Any tips or information that you have found useful in your endeavors to create more safety on whitewater (or other) rivers would be greatly appreciated.

KCCNY has been actively attempting to create a safer paddling environment in our club. If you like, we would be happy to share information with you. It is our hope that a nationwide safety network could be started. By creating a pool of shared information, it is our wish that the rate of river-related accidents will be reduced.

If you are interested in participating contact me at:

R.D.#2, Box 101A
Yorktown Heights, N.Y. 10598
914-248-8004

Sincerely,
Nancy Sklavos

More classic swims

Dear Editor,

There is some benefit to the march of time. Evidence strongly suggests that memorable swims are ultimately only retained in the minds of the swimmer.

Recently I attended a gathering in State College, Pa to honor John Sweet (i.e. Sweet's Falls on the Gauley) for his years of dedication to the white-

waterboating division of the Penn State Outing Club. John introduced me, like most others at the gathering, into a new definition of life, called boating rivers. At this event I crossed "bows" with folks who I have not seen or boated with since my early outings ten years ago, when I did not fully appreciate the coordinated movements of the eskimo roll. At the time many of these folks were experts with names recorded in the racing world.

In trying to identify past boating trips, I would refer to times and locations where an eskimo roll eluded my efforts. However, the memory of such happenings, of most noted significance to me, had not been retained by my inspirators in the sport. Indeed, when others tried to identify past trips in such a fashion, the accused rescuers would produce blank looks of "OK, if you say you swam at dip-a-dip drop, I believe you."

Moral: The swim is ultimately a very personal experience of which the boating society has a very limited interest.

Given this insight, I tried to recall the swims of my boating buddies and buddies (the female gender). Its true, I had to search long and hard for many of these memories. Based on this exercise, it is clear that only theatrics and machoism (ladies not excluded here) perpetuate the memory.

For example, a notable swim that comes to mind is one of Glen Gilder's on the Top Yough. This was back in the days when the best way to run the Upper Yough was to do both the Top and the Upper together on natural flow to avoid the Sang Run put-in with its "lead in the air environment". (Note: The gentleman that was rumored to be responsible for this air pollution now rents a raft put-in. God, how times change.)

Anyway, at the put-in for the Top, Greg, a very talented but new to the sport boater, and I discussed the issue of airbags. Greg had recently decided that airbags were not worth the small amount of weight that one was forced to drag around. He reasoned that his risk of swimming at this point of his boating career was very small. In

order to get the most performance out of one's kevlar boat, one left the airbags at home.

Technically speaking, Glen had a point. Airbags do add weight. But my position on the issue was that one should have at least one small bag. A small bag makes a significant difference in keeping a boat afloat vs. no bags.

Like all put-in discussions, as in most discussions in life, issues are not resolved until the test of fire (or, in this case, running water) is applied. Within 1000 yards of the put-in Glen parked himself sideways in a hole-essentially pour-over- with rocks blocking the exits. Upstream rolls were only effective in cooling the overheated, not in "finding a way out". Thus, alas, Greg and his boat partner parted company. Greg quickly found sure footing, but his boat, engorged with the mass and momentum of the river and thus with a mind of its own, started negotiating the subsequent drops.

As any good posse in pursuit, one needed to "head him off at the pass". Thus I paddled ahead, jumped out of my boat and dove into the river to catch the boat and a rock at the same time before the next big one. Greg was lucky to get his buddy back in one piece.

No lame excused from Greg. In recognition of the "insert foot in mouth" situation, Greg appeared shortly from behind the upstream rocks with his jelly (i.e. river shoe) in his mouth. A testimony to the lessons life can teach us.

Of course, my boating skills have come a long way since my early years of swimming. I haven't had a swim in years. However, on occasion I have gotten out of my boat to walk and found the water over my head of the current too swift for safe footing.

Steve Taylor
Washington, D.C.

(Editors note to our readers...Steve Taylor is a well-known east coast kayaker, environmentalist and Love God.)

(Editors note to Glen Gilder...wherever you are...I know where Steve Taylor lives...and for a price...)

Editor's Reply: *Actually, Steve, I'm not so sure your theory really is valid. My friends can't seem to remember any of their own swims, but they recall all too well every one of mine. But Wic Walker once told me that if you don't swim once in a while you aren't testing yourself enough. God knows over the years I've been tested.*

But I too haven't had to swim in years. Nowadays when I get into trouble I just climb out of my boat and walk right across the surface of the water. Of course I went to Pitt, not Penn State.

R.H.G.



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Gauley Fest "best ever"

by Terry Shiels

It's Saturday morning, September 16, 1989. Adrenalin is pumping through the veins of anxious boaters as they launch just below the Summersville Dam. Gauley season is here again, delivering class V trepidation and exhilaration to adventure starved paddlers in search of whitewater thrills.

But this is not just another release day on the Gauley. For after a full day on the river, comes a full night of partying at the 1989 Gauley River Festival.

While boaters challenge Lost Paddle and Iron Ring a transformation is occurring at the New River Gorge Campground. Under the direction of Anita Adams, organizers and volunteers are turning a muddy field into what they hope will be the best Gauley Festival yet. Booths are chalked off, a covered stage is erected and bedecked with a neon kayak icon, the silent auction is prepared. Electrical hookups are strung overhead and video screens set into place. Concessionaires take their places, and soon refried beans are simmering at the Mexican Food booth. And finally, to everyone's relief, the all important beer truck arrives. Volunteers are still scurrying about, attending to last minute details, when the first guests arrive at 5 p.m.

Soon the trickle of visitors turns into an endless caravan of whitewater gypsies. In spite of intermittent rain, more than 1000 customers pass through the gate, setting a new attendance record. By the time the evening is over most, guests will be convinced that they got their \$5 worth.

The Festival might well be billed as a **Whitewater Woodstock**. Music fills the air, mud is everywhere, and many of the attendees look like they live close to the edge of mainstream American culture. They come hungry, tired and wet from a day on the river, but soon their spirits are revived.

Meandering through the Festival Marketplace is a whitewater shop-



Gauley Festival chairman Anita Adams thanks another Festival volunteer.

per's delight. The midway buzzes with techy talk of boats and gear. There are canoes and kayaks of every conceivable shape and construction...and color coordinated accessories to entice even the most fashion conscious.

Old acquaintances are renewed and new friends made as stories are told of rivers near and far. Palates are satisfied with salty tacos and nachos, making many thirst for beer...beer...and, more beer. Celebrants boogie up to the Festival Stage for a dose of rock and roll, courtesy of the Michael James Gang.

Pennsylvania's ever popular Flenée Brodeur returns to the Festival with whitewater folk songs, followed by a set of West Virginia coalfield blues served up hot by Princeton, West Virginia's Nat Reese and his band.

The silent auction is anything but. With Chris Koll in charge, what would you expect? But surely the rowdiness of the silent auction crew should be excused, after all, they are located next to the truck that will ultimately dispense more than 15 kegs of beer.

Barry Grimes and John Davis of the BWA's National Paddling Film Festival present a hot multi-screen video show, including highlights of the AWA's 1989 Ocoee Rodeo. Many of those at the Festival are delighted to spot them-

selves on screen.

By any measure the 89 Gauley Festival is a mega-success, a Class 5 river followed by a Class 6 party. More than \$10,000 is raised to support the conservation efforts of the AWA...and, of course, to initiate next year's Gauley Festival, which, once again, will surely be the biggest and best paddling party in the world.

Gauley Festival Coordinator Anita Adams and all of the Directors of the AWA want to take this opportunity to salute all of the volunteers who made the 1989 Gauley Festival the best ever.

Hats off to...

Pete Skinner, gate keeper; Mac Thorton, parking master; Pope Barrow, Bob Gedekoh, Bob and Susan Glanville, Tom McAndrew and Risa Callaway, AWA Booth; Pope Barrow, Master of Ceremonies; Risa Callaway, Festival Tee Shirts; Chris Koll Silent Auction chief, Raffle and Publications; Phyllis Horowitz and Risa Callaway, Marketplace promoters

Very special thanks to...

Barry Toscano, Neil Dana and Brian Wham for their electrifying performance against all odds...you brightened our night!

Barry Grimes and John Davis...Masterminds behind the Bluegrass Wildwater Association's Annual Whitewater Film Festival...for setting up the video area and sharing the hottest whitewater films around with our guests.

A world of thanks to...

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owners of the New River Gorge Campground, and their campground manager, Tom **Koontz**. Your patience, help and support were great.

And many, many thanks to...

Ron **Mullett**, Cathy Mullett, Tim Kelly, Beth Cox, Doug Cox, Brian Webb, Dave **Simpson**, Dave Albert, Forrest **Callaway**, Wayne Gentry, Susan **Gentry**, Dale Adams, Dave Reinhold, John Evans, R.B. **Binegar**, Maggie Evert, **Lythia Metzmeier**, Susan Gibson, John Vanluick, Linda Vanluick, Tim **Vermillion**, Mike **McQuade**, George Mower, Jamie **Shumway**, Barb Flanagan, Tim Chase, Tom Ordons, Kelly Wham, Cynthia Grimes, Bob Irons, Becky Irons, Daisy King, Elizabeth **McAndrew**, Don Spangler, Dack Hessian, Carol Bard, Connie **Weeby**, Tom **Worden**, Andrew Carr, Jon Maxwell, **Terry Shiels**, Lynn Aycock, Tim Spangler, Lee **Belknap**, Amanda and...lots of other people that we, no doubt, forgot to mention.

Also, thanks to our talented entertainers...Renee **Brodeur**, Folksinger Extraordinaire; Nat **Reese** and Band, authentic West Virginia Coalfield Blues; and the Michael James Gang, Rock and Roll.

And finally, thanks to all our corporate sponsors and marketplace participants....

Paddlesport donates grant

The American Whitewater Affiliation, the American Canoe Association, the American Rivers' Hydropower Center and the New Jersey Nature Conservancy have each received a \$1957 grant from the sponsors of the Paddlesport Festival, held each February in central New Jersey. Monies are to be used to benefit those who attended the Festival by protecting rivers and river-associated lands.

The Paddlesport Festival has grown in recent years from a gathering of a few hundred friends to a major event attracting thousands of paddlers and retailers. Organized initially by the New York/New Jersey River Conference, under the leadership of Al Musial, Bill Wyler and Roger **Coco**, the conference has in recent years been sponsored by a number of mid-Atlantic retail shops, including Boats and Paddles of Madison, NJ; the Jersey Paddler of

Brick, NJ; and Wildwater Designs of Penllyn Pike, PA.

The Paddlesport Festival had been consistently profitable over the years, and, as of 1989, its bank account had grown to \$8000. In a recent meeting of those responsible for the Festival over the past decade, the decision was made to release this money to conservation organizations.

In addition, since the Festival has been run as an increasingly commercial venture during recent years, it was decided that the original structure no longer served the event well. Henceforth the Festival will be run as a for-profit venture by the two lead retailers, The Jersey Paddler and Wildwater Designs.

Those desiring more information regarding the Paddlesport Festival may contact Charlie Walbridge at 215-646-0157.



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AWA's Ocoee Rodeo proves rousing success



It's back, it's better than ever, and it's here to stay! The Ocoee Rodeo, that is. In August, nearly seventy-five competitors, several hundred spectators, and a few thousand passing rail customers got to see some of the premier boaters in the Southeast at their hot-dogging best, performing both above and below the surface of the water. The event marked the return of a summer institution at the ultimate waterpark in Eastern Tennessee: where 1200 CFS of guaranteed whitewater every weekend from March through November allows thousands of boaters to hone their skills. The Ocoee's five mile run hugs the road, providing the option of running portions or all of the river. Many boaters run the first part

of the river, characterized by shallow shoals, in surface boats, while others run "the back nine" in squirt boats, enjoying the "deeper experience" available downstream. This diversity of interests was reflected by the competitors...surface and squirt boaters...beginners and experts. Even some open boaters entered the competition though the event conflicted with the Open Boat Nationals...a circumstance rare of organizers promise to avoid in the future. Even boaters with only a modest amount of "harm" in them entered, determined to do their best. Some traveled a great distance. Rick Rodriguez braved the

Sandy Lottis photo
AWA director Anita Adams placed second in the Women's Squirt division.



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nine hour drive from Rockville, MD, spent an additional hour and a half struggling with his temperamental auto, but still enjoyed "comparing and measuring my skills against other squirt boaters."

Some boaters who were unsure about submitting themselves to public scrutiny, later admitted that it wasn't so bad.

"OK, I did some dumb things, maybe looked like a geek in front of my friends, but hey, it's not like they haven't seen that before," commented Lythia Metzmeier from Lexington, KY (2nd place finisher in the Women's Surface Boat class).

Unfortunately several highly skilled paddlers were conspicuous by their presence as spectators, not competitors, begging the issue of Game vs. Competition. You know who you are!

And there were a few who were unabashedly there to compete. Bob McDonough, the First Place finisher in the Men's Open Squirt Class,

voiced a desire to develop more standards for judges' evaluation of move difficulty, quality, control.

"Strict standards of performance will enable [squirt boating] to gain its deserved respect," he observed.

In fact, the calibre of athleticism exhibited at the Ocoee Rodeo/National Squirting Championship demands and deserves the national promotion and recognition. Sponsors are debating whether the National Squirting Championship should take place at a different site each year.

The organizers, Watauga Laminates and AWA, were extremely fortunate to have the financial and energy-related support of major sponsors including Man of Rubber, Go With Flow (Mike Miller's shop in Roswell, GA), Perception, Hydra, New Wave Kayak Products and Wildwater, Ltd.

Over thirty sponsors donated whitewater gear, books, and accessories which were raffled Saturday night at Wildwater, Ltd. Manager John Hollo-

ran provided a dinner and the site for manufacturer displays and free camping!

Participants couldn't have asked for more. Coverage by P.M. Magazine should help promote whitewater kayaking and the industry that has blossomed in Polk County, TN.

If you have any suggestions for planning the 1990 event, the sponsors at the AWA would like to hear from you. Write the Ocoee Rodeo c/o **American Whitewater**.

K-1 Novice Surface

1. Mark Hosley Banner Elk, NC
2. Carter Mahanes Easley, SC
3. Andy Barinowski Banner Elk, NC

K-1 Open Surface

1. Craig Denton Avondale Estates, GA
2. Doug Wellman Collegedale, TN
3. Daniel Liebman Ooltewah, TN

K-1 Women Surface

1. Kathy Kuyper Durham, NC
2. Lythia Metzmeier Winchester, KY
3. Karen Morton Chattanooga, TN
- Risa Callaway Denver, NC



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OC-1 Surface

1. Brenda Dent Washington, GA
2. Nolan Whitesell Atlanta, GA
3. Corinne Martin Danboro, GA

K-1 Novice Squirt

1. Tommy Merritt Rosewell, GA
2. Gregg Merchen Charlotte, NC
3. Mike McGuire Charlotte, NC

K-1 Open Squirt

1. Bob McDonough Bryson City, NC
2. Doug Wellman Collegedale, TN
3. Scott McInnis Nashville, TN

K-1 Women Squirt

1. Risa Calloway Denver, NC
2. Anita Adams Princeton, WV
3. Maggie Everett Birmingham, AL

C-1 Squirt Attainment

1. John Holloran Reliance, TN
1. Doug Shelten West Virginia
2. Craig Denton Avondale Estates, GA
3. Francis Mallory Canton, GA

Zbell triumphs at U. Yough...

again!

by Joe Greiner

With a time of 26 minutes and 16 seconds perennial favorite Roger Zbell won the Upper Yough Race on August 31 in Friendsville, Maryland. Zbell has led the field eight of the nine times the race has been run. His only loss came during a year when he outran the release of water from the hydro dam upstream.

Jed Prentice captured the C-1 division with a time of 31:38 and Kara Ruppel won the women's division with a time of 33:44.

A high water level contributed to the remarkable times posted this year but also led to several near calamities. The calibre of the contestants

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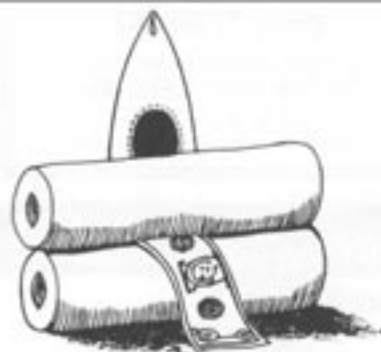
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Theresa M. Peterson photo

Roger Zbell strokes through Cheeseburger Falls enroute to his eighth victory.

also contributed to the faster times; Zbel, Ruppel, Prentice, Brian Homborg, Andy Bridge, Bill Hearn and Amy Ivers had all contended for seats on the U.S.

teams this year. In 1988 a time of 35 minutes would have led to a top ten spot, this year it would have resulted in a 31st place. Six kayakers paddled

downriver boats this year as opposed two last year.

In the days prior to the race several challengers wearing game faces sped down the river attempting to hone their lines. But on the day before the race rains brought the river up to 2.8, a difficult level even under unpressured circumstances. In fact, two of a party of four recreational boaters walked off the river that day, having lost one boat.

On the day of the race the river was still running 2.35, about four inches above the usual summer level. This narrowed the field somewhat as marginal competitors elected not to compete. Pennelec provided an eight hour release to facilitate the event and Barry Toscano started the race at 4 p.m. with competitors taking off at two minute intervals in an order determined by the results of the 1988 event. Judge Terry Peterson recorded times at the finish line four miles downstream.

Several near-misses this year reflect the seriousness of running the class V race. One male kayaker barely

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escaped a potentially lethal entrapment in a siphon in Snaggletooth; his boat was still pinned there three days later. A highly seeded woman kayaker flipped and lost her paddle in S Turn. Neither she, nor a friend who stopped to offer moral support, finished. In all 40 individuals completed the race, two decided not to start, and three did not finish.

The owners and guides of Precision Rafting captured eight of the ten top spots in the men's kayak division with master squirt boater Jeff Snyder finishing second, a minute and a half behind Zbel. Jed Prentice (C-1 slalom specialist) beat Andy Bridge (downriver C-1 specialist) by only four seconds.

Top finishers received prizes awarded by local merchants and white-water companies. The Upper Yough Race is informally organized and not ACA sanctioned. Several families were well represented this year; the Homberg family had three entrants, with two sons handily beating their dad. The race also

featured two Kinney brothers and a husband and wife match-up between Bob and Alice Vernon.

Last year Jesse Whittemore completed the race in an open boat, the first person ever to do so. This year he paddled an R-1, a Shredder, across the finish line in a little under an hour, prompting regulars to ask, "What next, Jesse? Surfboards?"

After the race Friendsville was awash with suds, food, race videos and live rock and roll in the traditional blast that climaxes the Upper Yough boating season. And by the end of the evening most competitors were already plotting their strategies for the 1990 competition.

Results (Winners in each division had record times.)

Men's K-1

1. Roger Zbel 26:16

2. Jeff Snyder 27:53
3. Brian Homberg 28:53
4. Ted Newton 29:16
5. Phil Coleman 29:49
6. Mike McCormick 31:24
7. Bill Heller 31:38
8. Chris Huffman 31:43
9. Scott Stough 32:12
10. Dan McMullen 32:23

Men's C-1

1. Jed Prentice 31:38
2. Andy Bridge 31:42
3. Billy Heam 33:19
4. Dean Tomko 34:10
5. Pete Zurflegh 36:01
6. Dan Homberg 54:01

Women's K-1

1. Kara Ruppel 33:44
2. Amy Ivers 34:05
3. Alice Vernon 35:01

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Protection sought for 10 WV rivers

A coalition of twenty-one organizations has asked the National Forest Service to study and to support designation of ten West Virginia whitewater rivers as "Wild and Scenic" Rivers. The ten rivers are within the Monongahela National Forest, which encompasses a huge, mostly wilderness area of the Allegheny Mountains of Eastern West Virginia.

The request focuses on the remote, mostly uninhabited sections of the ten rivers. Included are two Potomac tributaries: the South Branch Potomac (Smoke Hole Canyon section) and North Fork, South Branch Potomac (Hopeville Canyon section). Also included are five tributaries of the Cheat River: Shavers Fork, Glady Fork, Laurel Fork, Otter Creek and the lower Blackwater River, and three tributaries of the Gauley River: Williams, Cranberry and North Fork Cherry Rivers.

All of the rivers have outstanding wilderness and scenic values, as well as adventure class whitewater recreation (Class III or better) and several have excellent fishing. Protection of the rivers under the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act would require Congressional action, following appropriate studies and favorable recommendations by the National Forest Service. As of now, there is



only one whitewater river designated as Wild and Scenic in the Middle Atlantic states: West Virginia's Bluestone River.

The coalition brings together a wide spectrum of conservation groups, including six national organizations: American Canoe Association,

American Rivers, Inc., American Whitewater, Izaak Walton League of America, National Wildlife Federation and the Wilderness Society. The leading environmental groups in West Virginia also support the petition: Sierra Club (West Virginia Chapter), Trout Unlimited (West

Virginia Council), West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, and the West Virginia Wildwater Association. The other supporters include the large whitewater clubs in the Middle Atlantic states, notably the Canoe Cruisers Association of Greater Washington, which has provided the

funding for the effort.

Led by AWA Vice President Mac Thornton, representatives of the groups personally presented the 115-page petition (complete with color photographs, maps and other supporting materials) to F. Dale Robertson, Chief of the National Forest Service, and to Jim Page, Forest Supervisor of the Monongahela National Forest. This National Forest is due to commence its long term planning for river studies and protection in September. The coalition asks for studies of the subject rivers to be completed, and favorable recommendations sent to Congress, no later than 1991. Chief Robertson is a well-known supporter of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, having committed his agency to sponsor 200 rivers for designation by the year



River conservationists share a light moment with F. Dale Robertson, Chief of the U.S. Forest Service. FROM LEFT: Roger Harrison (WV Sierra Club), Mac Thornton (AWA Director), Dick Woodrow (USWF), Jim Page (Superintendent of Monongahela National Forest), Skip Deegans (WV Highlands Conservancy).

1993.

Copies of the petition can be obtained on an

at-cost basis for \$12.00 from Mac Thornton, 322 Tenth St. SE, Washington,

D.C. 20003. Make checks payable to the "Canoe Cruisers Association."

Salt Caves refuse to die

In 1989 AWA named the city of Klamath Falls the winner of the annual Hydromania Award in honor of its disastrous proposal to destroy the **best** whitewater on Oregon's Klamath River. This proposal, known as the Salt Caves Hydroelectric Project, or Salt II, remains one of the most senseless and destructive **hydroelectric** projects on the drawing boards anywhere in the nation. In terms of river abuse, only the GEM Irriga-

tion District Project on the North Fork of the Payette in Idaho can compete with Salt Caves. (The GEM Project was the 1988 AWA award winner.) The city originally proposed a **130** foot high dam near the California border. 60 percent of the **seventeen-** mile stretch of fabulous whitewater would be forever destroyed behind a huge impoundment, the last of 6 dams on the Upper Klamath.

The Klamath

originates near **Requa, California**, and finally makes its way to the Pacific 260 miles later. Near Keno, Oregon, below the John Boyle Dam, it drops 750 feet through the remote and scenic Klamath River Canyon in the Cascade Mountains. This is where the river is at its best with miles of class **III, IV,** and V whitewater. Its a **wild** ride with 18 major rapids. Few rivers in the nation can match it, and none have whitewater at this level with predictable flows all summer long. The popularity of the run has been growing by leaps and bounds. Although figures for noncommercial use are hard to come by, weekend

commercial rafting levels typically reach at least 200.

Before the city's Salt II proposal, there was a 1980 proposal by Pacific Power and Light to build a similar project. **PP&L** dropped its proposal, but the city of Klamath Falls picked up the ball with **Salt I** in 1982. This was to be a huge dam named after the caves on the river bank in the area. Salt I proved to be so damaging to the wild rainbow trout fishery that the city was forced by State agencies and citizens to switch to a scaledown version in 1986, Salt II. Salt II included fish ladders and other bells and whistles designed to placate the angry fishing community. But

conservation

even this design would do immense damage to the fisheries and would do massive damage to whitewater resources.

Visionaries at city hall believe that profits from the project will be so huge that they could be invested in economic development projects to reverse the city's 10-year decline. At the present time, the city is all but broke. Last year the street lights were turned off. The bizarre answer the city came up with was to build a massive capital-intensive boondoggle. Does something smell fishy here? You bet it does! A Klamath Falls developer, Trendwest Inc. lent the city \$1.4 million in 1984 to get started on the project. This loan will cost

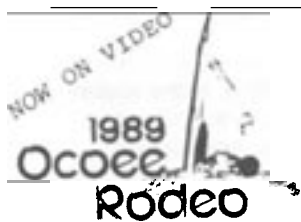
the city 12% interest down the road. Shortly after the deal with Trendwest was finalized, Harold Derrah, the city manager was hired as a vice president at Trendwest.

For a while the Salt Caves Project seemed to be losing steam. A coalition of whitewater and fishing interests continued to hammer away, and, after 9 years of trying, the project had suffered setback after setback, topped off by the AWA Hydromania Award. Then last fall the people of Oregon added the Klamath to the State wild and scenic rivers system by popular vote as part of Measure 7. This was followed by action by the State departments of Energy and Water Re-

sources and Justice which ruled against the dam. Even Governor Goldschmidt blasted the dam which he noted would have "permanent and irreversible" adverse environmental effects. After five persistent years, the dream of hydromaniacs in city hall at Klamath Falls seemed to be turning into a nightmare. But FERC still has the last word, and, can overrule State agencies and State Governors when it so desires.

In August of this year, FERC stepped in. FERC proposed no new dam, but a 10-mile long canal along the north side of the river instead. The political genius behind this proposal was only too obvious. The canal would

allow fish habitat to be maintained, maybe even improved. But the effect on whitewater would continue to be ruinous. And without high flows, the fish would be even more accessible. With the fishing groups no longer hostile, opposition to hydropower development would be fractured and weakened. Unfortunately, the FERC proposal may be an economic disaster for the city, but this is a matter which will have to be decided down the road. Meanwhile, FERC's support for the canal idea has breathed new life back into an almost comatose project and whitewater advocates are more worried than they have been in several years.



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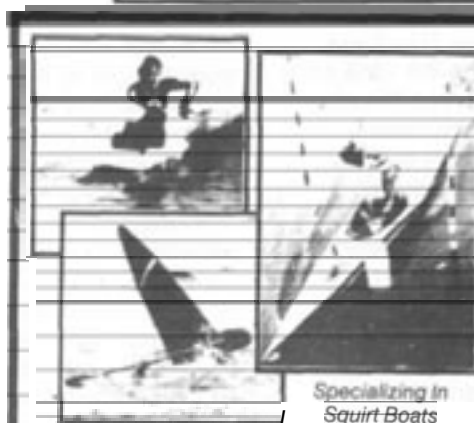
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AWA intervenes on Russell Fork

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In recent years, the Army Corps has

released an optimum 1300 cfs down the pond and

Russell Fork for several weekends in the fall. As a

result, users of the river by private boaters say soared,

and a modest commercial rafting market has sprung

up. Now, the installation of a hydro project puts

the current flow management at Flannagan Dam up

for grabs. A hydro developer would prefer low, constant flows to a com-

Paddlers have

intervened in legal proceedings regarding the installation of a hydropower

project at Flannagan Dam, a Corps of Engineers

facility on the Pound River in Dickenson County in far

southwestern Virginia. Led by the American Whitewater

Association, the intervention in the Federal Energy

Regulatory Commission case was joined by the

Eastern Professional River Outfitters, Inc. (EPRO),

and by the county government of Pike County,

Kentucky. Flannagan Dam is

on the Pound River, two

miles upstream of the

Pound's confluence with the Russell Fork. This two-

mile stretch on the Pound is a delightful, sylvan Class

III run. Soon after the Pound flows into the

Russell Fork, the river traverses Breaks Interstate

Park, which has been called, "Virginia's most

beautiful gorge." Here, the Russell Fork is a tough

Class V cataract named in a recent American Whitewater

article as one of the "Top 10" Appalachian

rapids like El Horrendo and Tower Falls. A descent of

the Pound/Russell Fork

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paratively few high releases for whitewater. The AWA has intervened and asked for an environmental impact statement, and plans to insist on guarantees that whitewater flows will not be jeopardized by the installation of hydro. EPRO is interested in protecting the fledgling rafting business, and Pike County is interested in enhancing a valuable whitewater tourist attraction to their area. (The fact that a government body has joined paddling groups greatly enhances our credibility.)

Permits needed for Great Falls

It's official: it is legal to paddle Great Falls of the Potomac, as long as one has signed a registration form with the State of Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR). The registration form contains an acknowledgement by the paddler that he or she assumes the risk of paddling a Class VI (Risk of Life) rapid, including the fact that rescue may be impossible. In addition, Great Falls paddlers are requested to notify the DNR police at (301) 974-3181 prior to running the Falls.

These Maryland rules, which went into effect on Sept. 4, were the culmination of a year of negotiations and comment among whitewater groups, the DNR, and the National Park Service (NPS), which controls both river banks in the area of the Falls. John Byrne, superintendent of the NPS land on the Virginia (south) bank of the river, was strongly opposed to allowing paddling of Great Falls, and that land remains closed to Great Falls paddlers.

On the other

hand, Bruce Gilmore, Director of the DNR's Boating Administration, and DNR's Bob Lundsford demonstrated an exemplary attitude. They listened carefully to paddling experts, and decided on a registration requirement as the logical way to manage Great Falls paddling. This approach was strongly supported by paddling organizations, including the AWA. For the record, no paddler who has knowingly attempted Great Falls has ever been killed or seriously injured. The only casualties at Great Falls have been novices who did not realize where they were. Incidentally, only recently has the NPS erected appropriate warning signs above Great Falls on the Virginia side to warn off novices.

Great Falls paddlers should continue to abide by an informal agreement with the NPS and DNR to only run Great Falls before 9:00 am or in the evenings when the adjacent parks are not

crowded.

DNR Registration forms are available from Bob Lundsford, Boating Administration, Tawes State

Office Building, Annapolis, Md. 21401 (301) 974-5611, or from Mac Thornton, AWA Vice President (202) 543-4923.

Jemez and Pecos: Wild and Scenic

A bill working its way through Congress this fall would designate as Wild and Scenic two rivers in New Mexico, the East Fork of the Jemez and the Pecos. 11 miles of the Jemez (from the Santa Fe National Forest boundary to the confluence with the Rio San Antonio at Battleship Rock picnic ground) would be included in the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers system.

As is usual with new Wild and Scenic river segments, almost all of the land is already in Federal ownership, in this instance, the Santa Fe National Forest. The legislation would also protect the Pecos River

from its headwaters near the Santa Barbara Divide in the Pecos Wilderness downstream to the town of Terrero. Again, most of the lands bordering the segment are already in Federal ownership and 13.5 miles of the river are fully protected under the Wilderness Act.

Because private lands are not involved (for the most part) with either of these rivers, and no hydroelectric or water proposals are pending, the bill has been flying through Congress like a guided missile. It is hard to imagine any bill involving any eastern river slipping through Congress this easily.



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Latest threat averted**Savage saved--again!**

For these second time in less than a year, the Savage River Defense Fund has defeated a proposed hydropower proposal for the Savage River, which has just received international recognition as the site of the 1989 World Canoe and Kayak Championships. Synergics, Inc, an Annapolis hydro developer, has surrendered its preliminary permit from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and it has abandoned plans to install a hydro facility at Savage River Dam. The company cited poor economics at current energy prices as the reason for the surrender.

This is the second time in less than a year that hydro development has been beaten back by paddling interests. Previously, Reed Hydro of Fort Washington, Md. applied for an exemption from licensing from FERC. However, the Savage River Defense Fund intervened in the FERC legal proceedings, and also convinced the State of Maryland to oppose the project. These moves proved fatal to Reed Hydro's application, because of the type of legal procedure they had filed under.

No sooner had

Reed Hydro been knocked out, when Synergics obtained a preliminary permit, utilizing a type of procedure in which State opposition would not matter. However, based on economic studies and other information supplied by paddlers, Synergics has given up and surrendered its permit.

The Savage River Defense Fund is actively seeking ways to permanently protect the Savage. One possibility would be to designate the Savage a "recreational river" under the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, but many government officials are concerned that local residents would not accept this idea. Another possibility is federal legislation

specifically exempting the Savage from hydro. Either of these steps would erase the threat of hydropower absolutely and permanently. Until such time as permanent protection is obtained, the Savage is at risk of another hydropower proposal, especially if energy prices rise significantly.

The Savage River Defense Fund is affiliated with the American Canoe Association, and SRDF thanks all the volunteers and contributors who helped make its efforts a success. Inquiries or requests for more information should be sent to Mac Thornton, SRDF Chairman, 322 Tenth St. SE, Washington, D.C. 20003; (202) 543-4923.

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Waist belt a wise accessory

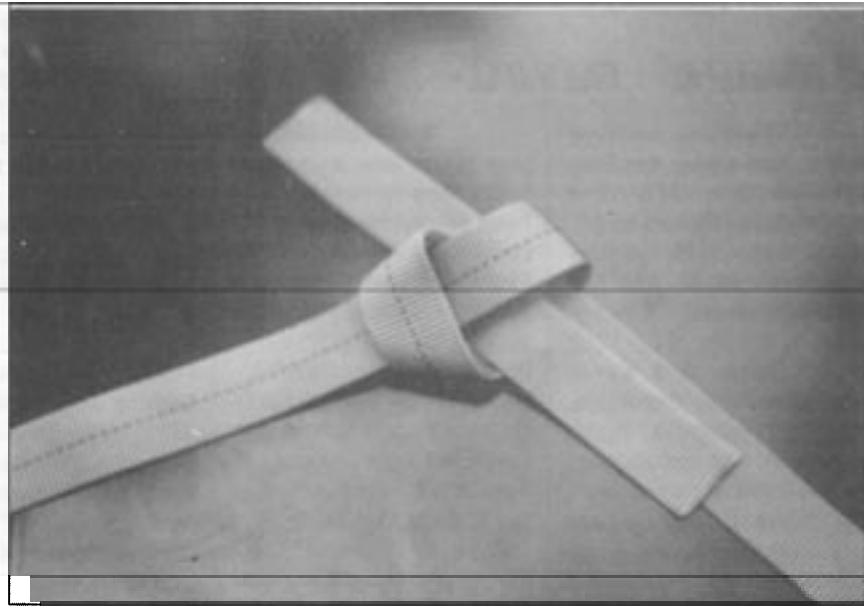
For years I have been pressing whitewater paddlers to routinely carry small quantities of rescue gear, including a rescue bag, several carabiners, and a knife. To this short list I would add the multi-purpose paddler's **waist-belt** webbing loop. Made from 1" tubular climber's webbing the loop is sized so that it can be worn around your waist with the ends fastened by a carabiner. This simple "waist belt" has a variety of uses. And by wearing it over your full length life jacket or underneath a short PFD, it can be brought into play quickly.

The loop is simple to make. An average-sized person will use about 8-10 feet of 1" tubular webbing at a cost of 30 cents per foot. The ends should be joined with a water knot, and the loop adjusted to fit snugly around the user's waist with the ends joined by a carabiner. To loosen the waist belt for winter boating (or if you gain weight) just add an extra carabiners.

A few of my favorite uses of the waist belt are as follows:



By Charlie Walbridge
AWA Safety Chairman



1) AS A PORTAGE

AID. The waist-belt adds between three and four feet to your reach. This is very useful on difficult portages. The waist belt is a perfect "leash" for "walking the dog". Just clip into the grab loop and drag your boat behind you. You can descend steep slopes by lowering the boat in front of you and following behind, digging in your heels for traction. It will help maintain control when passing your craft over large boulders and steep ledges. A good technique is to lower the boat into a bow-first position, then scramble around the obstacle and release your craft from below.

A waist belt is also good for pulling a decked boat through backwater pools, low-flowing high-water channels, and for lining down drops near the shore. I also use it as a leash to hold a boat while scouting on midstream rocks,

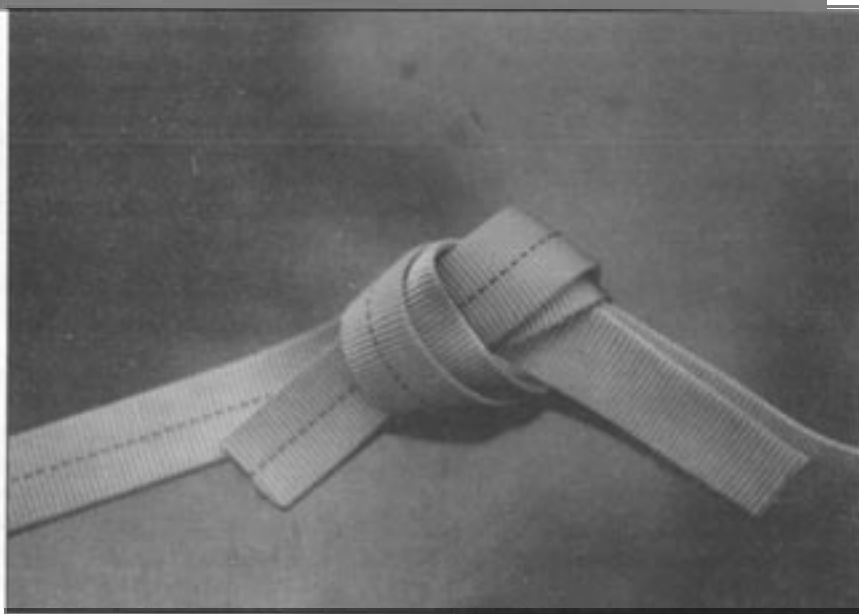


stepping into the loop to leave my hands free. All of these things can be done with a rescue bag, but it sure is nice not to have to hassle with all that line!

2) AS A BOAT RESCUE DEVICE:

"Bulldozing" a free-floating kayak or C-boat to shore in swift water is a real challenge under any circumstances, and almost impossible to do by yourself. Wick Walker showed me this spring how a waist-belt loop can be quickly converted into a very effective rescue sling, which leaves your arms free to paddle the boat efficiently to shore.

Just unclip the belt, clip the carabiner to the grab loop of the swamped boat, then sling the loop over your shoulder. If the loop slips, you can pull with it in the crook of your arm, but with some loss of power. To prevent this slippage, C-boaters can hook the loop on their offside shoulder. You can quickly release the loop if the pull on the boat becomes excessive or if you find yourself drifting into difficult rapids.



3) AS A RESCUE ANCHOR POINT:

The waist-belt can also be used as a sling to secure a belay point or set an anchor for a Z-drag. Most people know that a sling can be wrapped around a tree or hooked over a rock horn. Don't overlook the possibilities offered by underwater boulders. Quite often excellent anchor projections can be found a few inches under water. When there simply isn't enough rope available to reach across the river, anchoring from midstream rocks above or just below the surface is your best option. If one sling isn't long enough, several can be spliced together.



4) AS A SHORT RESCUE SUNG:

When working in close quarters, throwing or attaching a 70' rescue bag may leave you with a lot of extra line to manage. Your waist-belt may extend your reach just enough to do the job. When the bow of a kayak is under water and out of reach under water and you're trying to lift it free, the waist loop may be just the **handhold** you need. If someone is pinned or swimming nearby, a short loop of webbing is more convenient to use than a rescue bag with less risk of entanglement.

5) AS AN EMERGENCY COCKPIT

GRABBER: When a kayak is pinned it is often helpful to **lift** the center of the boat. It may also be necessary to get a good **handhold** on the center of the craft while you figure out what to do. A standard carabiner can be jammed over the cockpit rim of most decked craft, hooking the webbing on securely. I prefer to use the new "Dog-Leg" biners. They have a slightly wider gate opening, and their design makes it easier to quickly

locate the end of the gate that opens.

As you can see, this loop has many functions besides rescue. In this age of expensive, high-tech equipment it's nice to find a simple tool that does many things. Get one and take it along on your next trip!

Desktop environmentalist

Pete Skinner deletes hydro

"River Conservationist of the Year"

Bill Masters, president of Perception, Incorporated, the world's leader in kayaking, announced the selection of Pete Skinner of West Sand Lake, NY, as the 1989 Perception "River Conservationist of the Year". The \$1000 award, at Skinner's request, are being donated to the AWA to further the organization's conservation efforts.

"Pete is a key person in relation to most of the river conservation efforts that are now being undertaken in New York State, the eastern United States, and, as a matter of fact, in the entire country, as they relate to the preservation of whitewater resources," said Ronald Dodson, President of the Audubon Society of New York State, in nomination of Skinner.

The Perception Award is in its ninth year, and is given annually to a group or an individual who has contributed significantly to the preservation of one or more of our free-flowing rivers.

Skinner is the second AWA director to receive the prestigious national award in the last three years. Pope Barrow was the 1987 award recipient.
--from Perception press release

Pete Skinner is ready to go to bed. It's after midnight and he's been typing since nine p.m. So far this evening, he's written the equivalent of 15 pages of copy in the form of letters, memos and position papers. His eyes ache, his back is sore, and his disposition is getting a little cranky.

But Pete has promised to complete one more report by the next day. So he stretches, rubs his eyes, settles down in his chair and starts to compose.

Skinner types quickly, seldom pausing to deliberate a phrase or ponder a spelling. And as line after line of words spill onto the screen of the monitor. Skinner is invigorated, caught up in the urgency of his message.

It is a message too crucial, too vital to express in normal language and Skinner attempts to expand the parameters of the written word.

"Hydro must be stopped!!!!" he'll type, slashing down a little harder with each exclamation point.

Or...

"**This** legislation **must be passed!!!!**" adding the stentorian emphasis of bold face to the pronouncement.

Or...

"**This access problem must be addressed!!!!**" underlining entire passages at a time to scream out their significance.

An hour passes and Skinner slumps in his seat, his work for the night finally complete. Punching control-F7, he selects the print-all option, and drags himself off to bed.

Pete falls asleep to the sound of the printer buzzing in the background. In the morning, a thick pile of documents, printed on fan-fold paper, lies on the floor ready to be mailed.

Night after night, Skinner follows a similar routine, poised behind his computer grinding out reams of correspondence. He is a new breed of conservationist--a desktop environmentalist. Armed with a fast IBM-clone and the latest spreadsheet, data base and word processing software, Skinner singlehandedly chums out a flood of technical



studies, financial analysis, legal briefs, site evaluations and lobbying letters.

At times, Skinner's efforts must seem pointless. How can one man, even with the assistance of the latest in desktop technology, stand in the path of the well-heeled organization of hydro developer? It's a case of David versus Goliath all over again.

But Skinner has been **successful**. How does he do it?

Picture the development of a hydro project as a series of huge cogs, all inexorably grinding toward the goal of obliterating another free-flowing river. One cog is the actual developer, another is **FERC**, another the state **DEC** and another might be any one of a number of state or municipal bureaucracies.

In the past, the money and influence of the hydro industry has served to grease the gears, permitting the project roll over potential opposition.

But Skinner realizes that every **one** of **his** documents is like a single grain of sand thrown between the cogs. And when he multiplies his output by ten, or by one hundred, the gears began to clog and finally freeze in place. Nevertheless, it is a tedious, frustrating process.

A desktop environmentalist labors in relative obscurity. There's no glamour in sitting before a computer screen. To make the pages of Outside Magazine, an environmentalist needs to be more spectacular.

Groups like Earth First! grab plenty of headlines with elaborate **environmental** pranks that include painting a fake **crack** on the Glen Canyon Dam. And outlaw monkey **wrenchers** have been immortalized by Edward Abbey for shenanigans like pulling survey markers and sugaring gas tanks.

But despite their lack of publicity, in terms of bottom-line results, desktop **environmentalists** like Skinner are often more effective than their celebrated brethren.

In New **York**, Skinner recruited a small force of environmentally minded computer nerds who pumped out enough documents to effectively stall proposed hydro projects on the Black, Oswegatchie and **Racquette** Rivers. They assailed the established "avoided **costs**" payback (the lifeblood of small hydro) to the point that legislation to eliminate the process is **being** proposed. And they hammered away at utilities to the point where hydro dams are starting to release water back into formerly dewatered reaches to test the practicality of **whitewater** use.

Skinner and **his** desktop cronies actually achieved results--not just attracted public attention. Maybe they'd gain a little well-deserved recognition if they only had a catchy nickname...

Call them "the **WordPerfect** Gang."

The day **after** the 1989 Gauley River Festival, AWA director Pope Barrow and I joined Pete for a run **down** the Upper Meadow.

None of us had ever boated that section of the Meadow, but we'd heard the river was an enjoyable class 4 **run** with only the middle three miles presenting significant difficulty.

River Rambo

*Attached to the front of Pete Skinner's house is a war **room**, **filled** with technical papers, legal documents, newspaper articles, computer files...**mountains of files**, incredible **stacks of stuff** about rivers and hydro projects. It is the battlefield debris from years of river wars.*

*Skinner is a one-man army. He's a **Rambo**, with 15 different kinds of weapons slung around his neck, except that in Pete's case; the weapons are **motions, court pleadings, technical studies, financial analyses, site evaluations and press releases**.*

*Like **Rambo**, Skinner fires off a lot of **ammo**, easily several thousand **rounds** a year. No target is too big. He fires off so much mail that he should be made an honorary postmaster.*

*And lately, Pete's been hitting the **bullseye** with increasing frequency.*

*A hydro **developer** once dubbed Pete Skinner an "environmental kook". Is Skinner really the maniac they say he is?*

*Well, maybe. **Skinner** is crazy about rivers. But Pete's form of madness is too incredibly effective to be dismissed as "**kooky**". Perception had no choice but to name him 1989 River **Conservationist** of the Year.*

—Pope Barrow, AWA Director

Bad James Joyce

*Peter Skinner is the embodiment of the cliché "if you want something **done** look for **a man** who is already **busy**." The **first** time I ever spoke to Peter was in 1983 when I called him to ask for advice about stopping some hydro projects from being built on the Black River. He **asked** the status of the projects and when I told him one was already licensed, he said "don't waste your time."*

*Never one to be accused of having a fear of tilting at **watermills**, Peter subsequently joined the fight. He spent a phenomenal amount of time **working** to save the river, resulting in the landmark agreement with the Glen Park hydro project which helped secure the river's future as a recreational resource.*

*One thing about Peter that I am sure **has** served to endear him to both the hydro paver community and editors of magazines such as this is his proclivity for verbosity. If **there** exists a "bad James Joyce" writing contest, I am sure a multitude of winning **passages** can be **gleaned from** some of the vitriolic missives penned by Peter to our friends in the hydro industry.*

*One that pops immediately into my mind had to do with construction workers knocking **down** a number of trees and shrubs along the banks of a river that we were trying to preserve. Peter's description went something like this:*

*"...and the workers have **wantonly** and maliciously denuded the sides of the gorge of the tenacious native **cedar trees and ferns** which had previously festooned the **banks**, eking out precarious existences in the most minute **niches from** which they had for centuries scoffed at gravity while rewarding the adventurous river traveler with spiritually inspirational natural vistas."*

*—Ron Smith, **Adirondack River Outfitters***

Pete quickly took the lead. After a quick flat section, the river assumed a **continuous** nature as we entered the challenging portion of the run. Pope and I **frequently** eddied intending to boat scout an approaching ledge drop. but **Skinner** would blissfully float to the edge and **then** plunge precipitously ahead.

"That damn **Skinner**," Pope would curse as we'd rush out of the eddy and careen through an unfamiliar rapid in an attempt to catch up.

But Pope had no reason to complain. He's known Pete for a decade, and he should realize it's just part of **Skinner's** nature to precipitously plunge into unknown water. That seems to represent **Skinner's** philosophy of **life**—both on and off the river.

But for those of us who prefer to take a more deliberate line through the rapids, or for those who would like to at least first peek over the top of the drop, following along in **Skinner's** wake on a river **trip** or while cooperating on a **conservation** project can be a disconcerting and exasperating experience.

Skinner is the consummate point man. He'll jump into the middle of a hydraulic or an equally sticky conservation issue without a second thought. The rest of **us** will watch with **horror** as **Skinner** gets royally trashed by either the river or by proponents of a hydro development—but sooner or later he'll bob out of the boil and wave for us to follow him down while he cheerfully paddles off searching for a new dragon to tilt.

But because we've watched Skinner take the initial beating, the rest of us are better prepared to **run** a better line through the drop or to sort out the details of a river issue.

The only problem **is--Skinner** keeps waving to us from below the next drop. "Come on! Come on!"

If Skinner tried his "burr under the saddle" routine down in Columbia, he'd have **been** whacked long ago.

Skinner makes a profession out of being a pain in the butt. In his daytime job as chief environmental engineer for the New York State **attorney general's office**, **Skinner** has led investigations against large corporate polluters resulting in claims by the state totaled in millions of dollars.

And during his off-time avocation of river advocate, Pete has spearheaded opposition resulting in the **cancellation** or delay of hydro projects that would have netted their owners profits counted in six figures or higher.

The loss of that **kind** of money tends to make people a little testy. And it's sort of a backhanded complement that while businessmen may eagerly ravish the environment is pursuit of profit, they still draw the line at burying a conservationist in the end **zone** of Giants Stadium.

But that doesn't mean that Skinner's opponents don't occasionally get nasty.

A particular upstate New York newspaper **has** held an editorial bias against **Skinner** since the beginning of his opposition to proposed **dams** on the Black River. And a **cagy hydro** developer, angered by costly delays created when **Skinner** caught him starting a dam project before his license was granted, fed the publication an unsubstantiated **press** release claiming **Skinner** misrepresented his position

on the AG staff to promote river conservation.

The published report created a tempest in a teapot. To his credit, the NY **attorney** general quickly **rejected** the allegations as unfounded, but not before Skinner endured a week of anguish wondering if political pressures would unjustly strip him of his job.

And there have been other confrontations. After AWA sparked opposition that put the brakes to a proposed dam on the **Oswegatchie**, **Skinner** and AWA director Bob Glanville were followed by a pack of vocal and obscene detractors as they descended the river. And there have been other occasions, **too** numerous to mention, where **Skinner** has **been** turned back at access gates or hydro sites, informed by personnel therein that his is a distinctly undesirable presence.

But at least, thank **God**, they didn't off the pesky SOB. These days it seems that as soon as an environmentalist is **sacred**. Hollywood wants to make a movie of their life.

Now who the hell could ever portray Pete Skinner? Dustin Hoffman comes to mind. It's a role similar to the part Hoffman played in "All the President's Men." But, no--Hoffman would never agree to shave his head.

Skinner can be quite the smoozer. If he was French, he'd be kissing your cheeks at every **opportunity**. Fortunately he simply hugs a lot and interjects, "Great!!! ...Great!!!" after your every second sentence.

To be fair, Pete's demeanor is not necessarily a sham. Despite the frequent frustrations of **his** position. Pete retains an enthusiastic outlook. He's naturally excited about life. He genuinely likes people.

But it's also true that over the years, Skinner has learned the necessity of presenting an optimistic face to the community. The early part of the decade were "dark days" for the AWA. Membership had trailed off, the journal was published **infrequently** and the organization bank **account** was measured in pennies rather than dollars.

In the meantime, the threat to America's rivers was never greater. The **Purpa** Act had subsidized the development of countless hydro sites and the elimination of hundreds of **whitewater runs** appeared unavoidable.

During that period. Skinner led a handful of volunteers in maintaining AWA programs. With help and money at a **premium**, Pete became adept at wheedling and cajoling every extra hour of effort, every additional penny of support. **from** the limited resources at hand. And to keep overworked volunteers **from** throwing up their hands in despair, **Skinner** was always quick with a reassuring pat on the back. complementing their efforts as "Great!!! Great!!!"

The AWA stands on **firmer** ground now. Membership is up, there's money in the bank, and battles to save rivers are being won. And if **Skinner** sounds a little effusive at times, it's probably out of a sincere sense of gratitude that **there** are others out there willing to help **share** the burden.

But hey. Pete, you don't need to keep stroking. It's the rest of us who should **survey** your work of the past decade and say:

"Great!!! Great!!!"

What hair?

*Regarding Peter Skinner's article on "Grayhair Boating" in the July/August 1989 issue: Where did that title come from? We all know that Peter doesn't have **any** hair on his head, no less gray hair!*

*I, on the other hand, am well beyond salt and pepper gray, in large part due to Peter's enthusiastic agenda for my first year paddling: the **Moose**, the Black, the Ottawa at flood, the Hudson, the South Fork of the Payette, the **Selway**...need I say more?*

*Pete's ability to coach beginners is excellent. He requires his student to **think** to plan a route and stick with it, but to plan a fall-back route, to roll under any circumstances (I'm still working on this) and to read and understand the water. I **am** grateful for his coaching...*

*--Barbara **Rottier**, Lake Placid, NY*

Human Sacrifice

*On New York's Moose River, there's a hole called **Mixmaster** that can eat you alive. I know.*

*My first time there and only my second experience with Pete Skinner, he **enthusiastically encouraged** me to jump right in. I quickly found I had a tiger by the tail and was thoroughly **cartwheeled** and **windowshaded** before **finally** parting company with both hole **and** gear. Back on shore, Pete was grinning widely and chortling something about being **beat** about the ears.*

*Since then, I've come to know both **Mixmaster** and Pete better. Precious few willingly stop in **Mixmaster**. As for Pete, he's very careful when leading **novices** but **has no** mercy for those who should know better. **If you** come to New York, look for these two gems, but be wary of both.*

--Barry Robinson, Albany, NY

From Russia...

with love

California girls travel to Siberia to find more than a whitewater competition



by Susan Norman

Our journey began with a four hour Aerflot flight from Moscow to Barnoul, the capital of Siberia. After months of preparation and anticipation we were actually on our way and the energy level was high. The front half of the plane was enveloped in a wild non-stop party led by the Costa Rican and Italian teams. Everyone was dancing in the seats and the aisles.

Upon our descent into Barnoul, hard, cold reality set in. As we broke through the clouds we were informed that the temperature was -4 degrees Centigrade. Through the windows we viewed a vast, white, frozen landscape. The Zambians, having never seen snow before, thought at

first they were seeing paper.

Yes, we were really in Siberia and, yes, it was going to be gnarly.

THE EVENT

It was to be the first of its kind...the First International Peace Camp...Altai '89...the largest international raft competition in history. Held on the Chuya River in Siberia, the event was organized by Laboratory of Adventures and the Soviet Peace Fund in the USSR, and Project Raft, a non-profit organization based in California.

The objective was to bring together whitewater paddlers from around the world to participate in four days of friendly competition. But a more important goal was to promote cooperation and under-

standing among peoples from many nations, despite cultural and ideological differences. We shared expertise, experiences and ideals. We sang, danced and paddled together.

We shared the sport which for most of us is a passion and for many a lifestyle. And it was incredible!

Three hundred competitors representing fourteen nations participated including fifteen Soviet, seven American and five European teams; teams from Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Costa Rica; and many combined teams in which Soviets and foreigners competed together, including paddlers from Zambia and Ne-



pal.

Our team was the only all-women's team to compete at the event. The U.S. Women's **Whitewater** Team featured a diverse group of ten **white-water** rafters and **kayakers** brought together by Team Captain Julie Munger, one of the top class V whitewater guides in the country. A wide range of personalities, ages and river running experience were represented on our team. But we shared a common love of **river-sport** and **all** felt tremendously privileged to have the opportunity to participate in this event.

Being the only women's team, we expected to be high-profile...that people would scrutinize us both on and off the water. But nothing prepared us for the attention we received. There are few skilled women boaters in the Soviet Union and this was a **first** encounter with "American Women" for most of the Soviets we met.

We were rare and exotic animals indeed and we were continually approached for photographs and interviews. We also received many gifts. Most of us will never feel like such celebrities again, and it was an experience I'll never forget.

But most importantly, we were

given a tremendous opportunity to represent our country, and our gender. And judging by the response of the Soviet people, we set a positive example for "women in whitewater".

THE JOURNEY

All the "foreign" competitors met in Moscow to begin the incredible odyssey to the Chuya River, located in the Altai mountains of Siberia, 60 miles **from** the Mongolian Border. Moving 180 people plus equip-

ment to the boondocks of Siberia proved a monumental feat, particularly in the often inflexible, unpredictable and slow moving Soviet system. But it is a testament to the dedication and hard work



Photos: (opposite page) Julie Munger and one of two Soviet women contestants; (top) Renee jams with **Surgei** of the USSR team; (above) Amazonskis in front of the Kremlin.

of the event's organizers that our journey proceeded with remarkable smoothness.

After the aforementioned flight from Moscow to **Barnoul**, we continued our journey for two days by bus, eventually driving out of the snow to our collective and great relief. Still, the countryside was bleak. We discovered that a large part of the Soviet Union is still Third World. The houses in the villages were **weatherworn**, often unpainted, and surrounded by bare dirt and mud. Many villages had no running water and little electricity; it was hard to fathom what life was like for these people during their long, dark, wild winters.

Finally, at the end of our journey, a day's drive from the nearest town, we **pulled** into Camp One. Camping with 500 people is an experience I will not **soon** forget. We looked like an invading army.

We were given our rations for the week on arrival by the Soviet Peace Fund. The food was plentiful but not for the faint of heart. The Soviet diet is ripe with fat, sugar and caffeine. Our rations consisted primarily of bread, cheese, sausage, canned fish and **beef..heavy** on the lard. This was supplemented with noodles, **rice,kasha**, sweetened condensed **milk, cookies**, chocolate, sugar and tea. The only vegetables were cucumbers and onions.

We gathered our rations and squeezed in among the Soviet camps to pitch our tents. We were packed closely together, but, after **all**, that was the idea. After hastily throwing together our camp, we set out to mingle with our Soviet competitors.

THE COMPETITION

The competition was varied and challenging. Having been a **four** time member of the U.S. **Whitewater** Slalom and Wildwater Team I had participated in many competitions, but **never** one like this. The competition was **taken** seriously by most, but the desire to **win** was overshadowed by the desire to have **fun**. Some of my most **rewarding** moments in whitewater racing **occurred** at the Chuya **Rally**.

The competition consisted of four events over four days. The **first**



Russian cataracts are equipped with thigh straps and paddled with C-1 strokes.

and third day featured slalom events which included four boat categories. These were kayak, 2 man cataract (cat), 4 man cat, and conventional rafts with oar/paddle combinations or rafts with a Soviet style sweep oar called a "Plot". The two slaloms were held at different locations on the river.

Low runoff kept us from big whitewater, but the course designers made up for that with difficult moves. Each category was scored using conventional whitewater slalom rules, but each team's score was based on the mean of the individual category scores.

The second day featured a Downriver Orienteering event. This required running a five mile section of river and locating various check points along the way using topo maps and a compass. Several slalom gates also had to be negotiated. The score was based on the elapsed time with penalties incurred for missed control points and gate touches.

The Rescue and Safety Competition was held on the last day. The required "moves" included rescuing a swimmer, flipping a 4 man cat and kayak, running a slalom gate while out of position (upside down and out of or on top of the boat), then getting the whole crew and all the equipment together into a safety zone with the aid of a throw bag team. This was scored on the total elapsed time with penalties for gate touches.

Final team rankings were based on the mean of each team's rankings in

the four events.

Participating in the competition was particularly rewarding for our team. The Soviets had not seen many skilled women boaters, and never "en masse". And, if I may be so bold, we blew them away.

But our Soviet competitors were not threatened or intimidated by our abilities, rather they were delighted and generous in their praise. At the end of the first day of competition we were dubbed the "Amazonkis". All of the teams were encouraged with cheers while on the course, but whenever one of boats was running the cheers would get decidedly louder and "Amazonki" could be heard over the roar of the water. At the finish line a Soviet fan, usually a fellow competitor, was always waiting to carry our boat and express his admiration of our run.

THE NIGHTS

But competition was only half of the Chuya experience. The schedule was hectic, the days full of whitewater racing, and the evenings with dancing, drinking and song. It was exhausting and the faces and names became a blur. We had to function on about five hours of sleep a night...that was most one could realistically expect. There was a lot of noise and no one wanted to miss out on the action. The generators ran late into the night and revelry echoed through the camp until the wee hours of the morning.

The weather was brutal. It

was cold, windy and rainy much of the time and toward the end of the event it snowed. But everyone was having too much fun to let a little thing like bad weather slow them down. Fires burned day and night and the Soviet camps always welcomed us with shelter, a warm spot by the fire and a cup of chay (tea).

Music was an important part of the Chuya experience, both in the hotels and in camp. We were treated to numerous performances by Soviet musicians, ranging from the joyful singing of the Siberian Women's Chorus, the dynamic acoustics of the Siberian Balalaika Orchestra, to the strange and haunting drone of the Mongolian Altai mountain people.

Singing was a popular activity in camp and a gratifying way to interact with our Soviet hosts. It allowed us to transcend language barriers and communicate directly from the soul.

On the third night a special Folksinging Competition was held. Every team performed a number for the rest of the camp...sharing a small piece of their culture. The Costa Ricans sang "La Bamba", the New Zealanders stripped to their skivvies and performed a Maori war chant and dance while the U.S. Women's Team sang our own special version of "Proud Mary".

Dancing was also popular, made possible by the powerful generators rumbling in the background. I'll never forget gazing down on an open area used for ceremonies and entertainment at one o'clock in the morning, watching one hundred Soviets and foreigners dance in the rain and bitter cold to the music of Tracy Chapman. Their wet, shiny faces were illuminated by the lights and displayed expressions of "idiot glee". It seemed the party would never end.

THE SOVIETS

Everyone at the event was impressed by the graciousness and hospitality of the Soviet people. We could not approach a Soviet camp without being forced to take the best seat by the fire. They were always eager to ply us with cookies, chocolate, or "chay" in return for conversation. The Soviets were not bashful about using their of-

ten meager English or German or French supplemented with sign language, in hopes of learning as much about us as possible.

They wanted to know what we did for a living, where we had traveled, how long we had paddled and whether we had husbands or children. They admired our independence, but seemed mystified by the fact that such obviously desirable women should not be married.

It was a challenge to explain the freedom which many women are used to and have come to expect in the United States.

The Soviet women were somewhat bashful about approaching us, but delighted when we initiated conversation and just as fascinated by their visitors as the men. I think it was inspiring for them to see us doing as well as many of the men's teams in the competition. Hopefully, it will encourage the Soviet women to get more involved in the sport, although they are not in a very supportive environment.

Whitewater paddling is still for the hard guys here. There have been many deaths on Soviet rivers. Around 50 people have perished on the Chuya during its short paddling history. Two individuals, not participating in the Rally, died in the Class 4-5 gorge upstream during our stay there. My impression from witnessing one of these tragedies, and from talking to a couple of Soviet paddlers afterwards, is that the Soviets are very aware of the risks and accept it as part of the sport.

This was a new concept to me.

having had the advantage of learning from people with superior expertise in both safety and technique, on rivers that were well known, in state of the art equipment. Some day these circumstances may exist in the Soviet Union, but that era has not yet arrived.

In many ways the Soviets are in a primitive stage in the evolution of whitewater paddling. They are still perfecting the technique and safety procedures which we have perfected over the past twenty-five years. But considering their limited resources, they have accomplished some remarkable things.

They do not have as much free time and their access to the rivers is limited because not many of them have cars. They are some of the toughest people I have ever met. We spent a week camping in grueling weather, paddling in snow melt, yet never saw any indication that they were out of their element. While we stayed comfortable in drysuits, booties and pile, the Soviets relied on ragtag wool and leaky nylon.

All their equipment, including paddles, boats, lifejackets and gear, is handmade, usually from materials confiscated from the government. The Soviet boats, each designed by its owner, display incredible diversity and ingenuity. The ranged from sleek cats resembling two kayaks strapped to a frame, to huge double sweep "plots" rowed by oars cut from small trees.

The "plots" were cumbersome, but the cats were the most dynamic please turn to page 51



A Russian "Plot" How would you like to guide it through "Lost Paddle?"

A feast of rivers



by: Joe Greiner

Smorgasbord n. 1: a luncheon or supper buffet offering a variety of foods and dishes 2: a heterogeneous mixture: Melange

Do you want low volume, steep creeks? Do you want moderate volume ledge drop runs? Do you want Grand Canyon large volume rapids? What about new foods prepared a new way? The Price Is Right. COME ON DOWN!! For the correct bid, this showcase of **Chilean** whitewater and food could be yours.

The time was right. January was cold and gloomy even in Raleigh, North Carolina. The warm summer of the southern hemisphere beckoned.

So I joined nine other boaters winging our way from Miami to Santiago aboard the 11:00 PM red-eye special. We had signed up for a sixteen day trip with Eric Leaper of Sport International. Eric had inquired about our boat preferences and some of us found brand new boats of our choice waiting at the Miami airport. Our boats would ride in the baggage compartment of Ladeo Airlines for a one-way fee of \$95.

We landed early the next morning in sunny Santiago, then spent the day outfitting our boats and getting to know one another. Four of the group were from Alaska. (Can't imagine why anyone would want to leave Alaska in January!) Three were from the west and the other three of us were easterners. That night we were introduced to Chilean nightlife, Chilean wine, and a Chilean drink called pisco (peas-ko). Our sampling of Chilean food and culture had begun. In the morning we would taste our first Chilean river.

Wet Feet and Cups of Tea

The First river selection: medium volume and gradient, low medium difficulty.

For obvious reasons, the next day was a warm up as we shook off the cobwebs of wine and pisco and shook down our new boats. We paddled the Rio Teno, where the USA whitewater team had a training camp during a previous winter.

Second river selection: low volume, extreme drops, easy difficulty.

There are many Rio Claros in Chile but there is only one that has a section called Sieta Tazas or "Seven Teacups".

Left: A perception of difficulty? The First Teacup of the Rios Claros looks easier here than in a popular kayak advertisement.



Joe Greiner enters the maw of "One Eyed Jack" on the Rio Bio Bio.

This section of this Rio Claro falls through limestone rocks and has carved a series of seven waterfalls ranging from 4 to about 100 feet high. Each of these falls lands in a "teacup" or deep, crystal blue pool. The seventh falls is the highest and is not run. The sixth could be run but generally is not because of the difficulty of taking out before the final grand plunge.

That leaves five for the paddler to enjoy. The first one has gained fame by way of a Perception ad. You too can be captured on film halfway down this 22 Foot drop.

After two small drops, the paddler runs a 30 foot drop. Because of the cliff Formation, it is impractical to scout this drop or the next. If you trust your trip Leader and the shouts of joy that echo from deep below after your buddies have run the drop, you just take a deep breath and over you go.

After the 30 footer comes a wide-lipped 35 footer. By now, you know what to expect, so you can throw your paddle away as you hurtle over the edge. Or, you can be really creative and run it three abreast. Michael Jordan never caught this much air. The Sieta Tazas (Seven Teacups) proved easy because of the extremely low volume. No hydraulics formed under the drops

and there were no **rocks** in any of the landing zones. At worst, you had to roll at the bottom. It was, we all agreed, a photo opportunity of a lifetime. And since the whole **run** is only about a half mile long, some of us chose to hike back to the put in to do it again. Like any good smorgasbord, you can go back for seconds.

The Bio-Bio

Third river selection: *Large volume, large river, pool-drop, difficulty varies depending on canyon.*

After spending a day driving **from** Santiago to the Bio-Bio region, we had

our **first taste** of the Bio-Bio. Before going on this trip, I assumed that the Bio-Bio was like the Grand Canyon with access limited to one put in and one take out many miles downstream.

But there is a road of sorts that follows the river the whole way. Further, 85% of the rapids and about 95% of the difficulty on the Bio-Bio **are** concentrated in three canyons. These three canyons follow one after another and there are **distinct** take outs between canyons. Eric had arranged to stay at a ranch house along the river between two of the canyons. **Our** drivers then shuttled us daily to the put in of the canyon we wanted to run.

Almost **all** of the **difficult** whitewater on the Bio-Bio can be experienced in day trips. Over six days, we ran each of the canyons twice.

Better yet, we got to **run** them in order of difficulty. If you were to do a trip starting **from** the top of the river, the **first** canyon you would encounter after three days of lazy floating is the **Nirrecco** Canyon. Unfortunately, this is also the hardest canyon, containing **Jugbuster**, **Milky Way**, **Lost Yak**, **Hell Half Mile**, **Lava South**, **Cyclops**, and **Last Laugh**. The contrast with the preceding easy days would magnify the difficulty.

After surviving Nirrecco Canyon,

OLGA THE CHOLGA

by: Joe Greiner

Prologue: While in Chile last January I was witness to a natural phenomenon that has scientists and boaters still talking. Cholgas are small saltwater shellfish found along the southern coast of Chile. They look something like small oysters, generally weighing less than three ounces. Although not necessarily appealing in appearance, they are considered a delicacy among Chileans. Until recently, there was no record of sighting of a cholga in fresh water.

And then on the Rio Bio-Bio...

*He came to Chile from the United States
To run some new rivers and acquire new tastes.*

*He tried some new food and said with smile,
"That's really good. I'm content for awhile."*

*But when given a cholga for the very first time,
He refused and said, "In your mouth!! Not mine."*

*As time went by, he still would not eat
anything like a cholga. He's missing a treat.*

*The day of the big rapid, he got out to scout.
He smiled and said, "Oh...without a doubt,*

*If I paddle hard and I fight and I fight,
I can get by that big hole. There!! Just to the right!"*

*Out into the rapid he paddled with all of his might.
And it looked to all as if he had passed on the right.*

*But GIGANTIC OLGA, a freshwater cholga, reached
out and drew back
the terrified boater paddling madly in his kayak.*

*She thrashed him. She thrashed him. He cartwheeled.
He rolled.
But Olga just smiled and kept fast ahold.*

*Imagine his horror as he looked around
and saw this cholga weighing thousands of
pounds*

*Munching and chewing on both ends of his
boat.
"My God", he thought. "How long can I stay
afloat??"*

*Then out of the depths, he made an effort
supreme,
along the shore, we could hear him scream.*

*"All right, I'll eat them. Let me out of this
thing.
I want to see home again before next spring.*

*Olga smiled. Now quite content.
He paddled out. Boat badly bent.*

*Back to the camp like an arrow he flew.
And ate every cholga in sight, old or new.*

*From that day forth his boating improved.
Each hole he came to suddenly turned smooth.*

*When boating in Chile, the moral....It's true!
Eat all of your cholgas or...they will eat you.*



Joe Greiner flies offdrop on the Upper Fuy.

one would face the 100 Waterfalls Canyon. This is the easiest of the three canyons and is named for the waterfalls that plummet into the river from either side after a rain.

The final canyon is the Royal Flush Gorge with its Ace, King, Queen of Hearts, One-eyed Jack, Ten etc. This canyon is tough but not as difficult as the Nirrecco canyon. We decided to run the 100 Waterfalls first, followed by the Royal Flush Gorge. Then, accustomed to the high volume, head for the Nirrecco Canyon.

We spent a lot of time looking over the tasty selections that the Bio-Bio had laid out for us. To an Easterner like myself, the rapids were large and a little intimidating. The Westerners seemed to eat it up. Eventually, the eastern contingent joined in the feast. We spent the next six days gorging ourselves on big volume rapids. Most of us chose two courses in each canyon while others selected a rest day or two. Like any good smorgasbord, one could opt for as much or as little as one wants.

All this time, our Chilean cook was busy feeding the gringos food prepared in the Chilean way. It was here that we were introduced to cholgas. And it was on the Bio-Bio that scien-

tific history was made after one of the group flat-out refused to eat the ugly things. An epic(?) poem commemorating the occasion follows this narrative.

Other Treats

After six days on the Bio-Bio we spent a day driving further south to the Lakes region of Chile where we resumed our river smorgasbord.

Fourth river selection: medium volume, steep gradient, ledge-pool river, high difficulty. The Upper Fuy (Fwee) was probably the Easterners' favorite. The Upper Fuy is like the Ledges section of the Tellico or the Big Sandy with higher drops, more of them, better water quality, and more volume. It was delightful romp through difficult but manageable water.

Fifth river selection: high volume, steep constant gradient, boulder strewn, moderate difficulty. After a confluence with a major feeder stream, the Lower Fuy is distinctly different than the Upper. One of the western boaters called it "classic constant gradient western style boating".

Sixth river selection: medium volume, drop-pool, medium-low difficulty. Each meal needs a light dessert and the Pucon provided just that. Two days

and two nights were spent in the resort town of Pucon under the glowing eye of the volcano Villarica.

Out of sixteen days in country we had paddled thirteen days, running eight sections of five different rivers, most of them twice. The food was just as varied and good as the rivers. Most of us gained weight.

It is often said that you cannot have it all. But Chile during our winter comes close. You can wear shorts again. There are many rivers to choose from. Other that we might have done include the Petrohue and the Futaleufu. Trips are available through several outfitters or you can go on your own.

But unless you know Spanish and the Chilean customs very well, spending time with an outfitter, at least at first, seems advantageous.

Once off the Pan-American highway, travel is over dirt roads of varying quality, some excellent and some horrible. The country is not heavily populated and consequently the streams have excellent water quality.

Hmmm, I'm getting nostalgic. Anyone for Chile this winter??

OUTFITTERS

Commercial trips are offered by the following in alphabetical order:

Nantahala Outdoor Center. Rafts and kayaks. At present Bio-Bio only. 704-488-2175.

Sobek. Primarily rafts with kayak "tag alongs". Bio-Bio only. 209-736-4524.

Sport International Kayaks. Three itineraries. 719-520-1784.

Boating the Alpine rivers of France



La Dron tumbles through the village of Pride-Les-Bain in the French Alps.

This may be Tuesday, but this place certainly isn't Summersville... or Ohiopyle, the Forks, Ducktown or any typical American river town.

But if you're willing to travel to France for whitewater... you have the right to expect a little ambience.

by Dana Chalfont

It was a loud roar. A real loud roar. Was it the river or my heart?

We were taking our **first** look at La Dron.

A cool foggy morning found paddling partner Bob **Beasley** and I high in the French Alps. The quaint little village of **Brides-Les-Bains** was nestled **at** both banks of a not so quaint raging stream. It looked **like** the Gauley outflow right downtown. I gulped, feeling the **first** shivers of nervous anticipation.

Well, it wasn't **THAT** BIG, but it sure was fast and bad...and icy. And those holes **WERE** **HUGE**...not to mention that tree blocking half the stream. parallel to the third or fourth **must-miss** hydraulic. You **know** the tingling that rushes through your skull just before you tackle a tough, new **run**. The fog shrouded peaks and heavy mist rising **from** the writhing torrent only added to the hollow feeling in my gut. It was going to be a screamer.

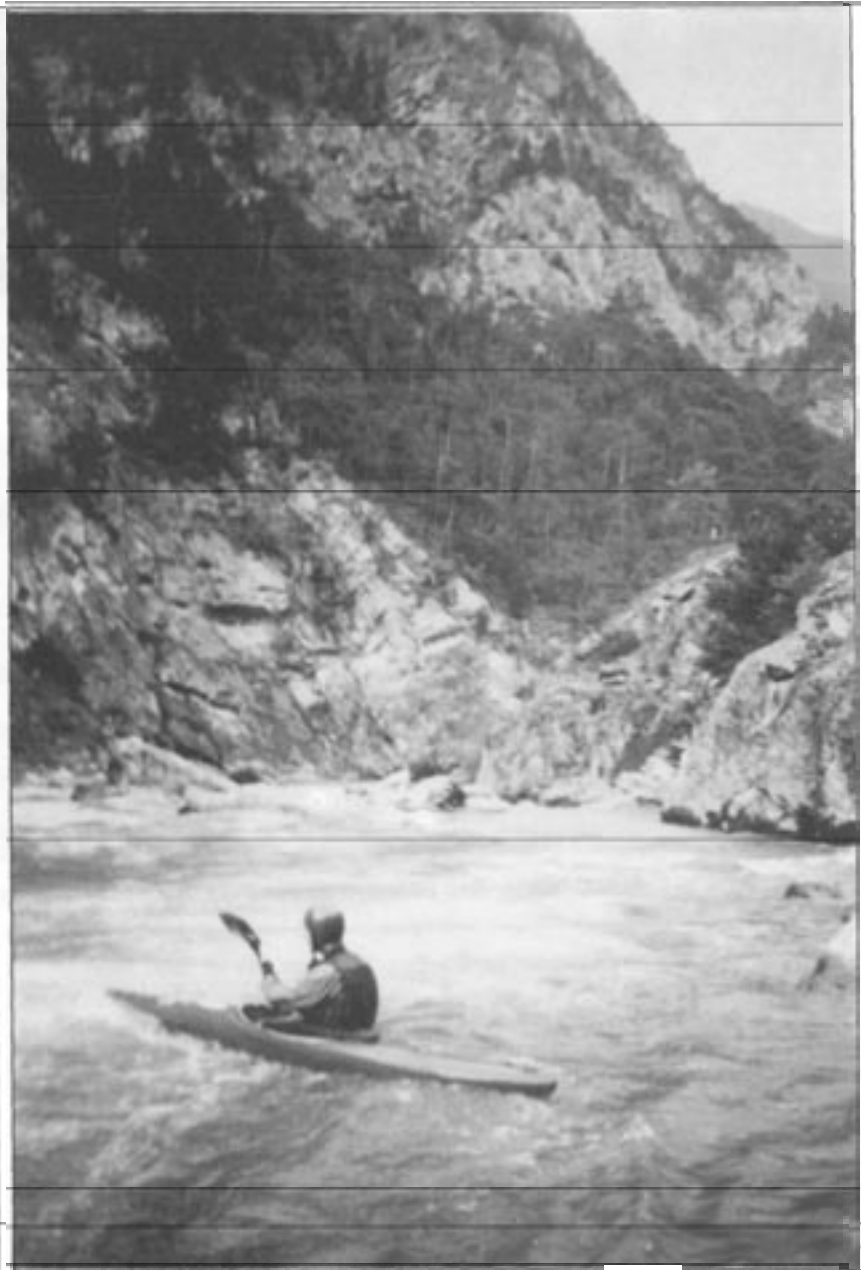
Kayaking the Alps

On the day before our assault on La Dron, **Beaz** and I found ourselves in the fabulous alpine town of Bourg-St-Maurice. We had spent a week running the **rivers** of southern France with Bob's employer, the Nantahala Outdoor Center. Then we ventured off to the north on our own...in search of new thrills. We were in the heart of ski country, the renowned areas Val d'Isere and Chourcevel lie up...almost straight up...the mad.

Les Arc's directly overlooks Bourg; it is accessible only by **tram**, but, none **theless**, there is an entire town up there. The view up and **down** the **Isere** valley was truly world class. The Alps **were** green and lush. small creeks **gurgled** happily, and the mountain rivers absolutely hummed.

We had a contact in **Bourg** with some river guides, but, **naturally**, we couldn't **find** them. A **friendly** face...there are such things in rural France, despite what you hear...directed us to the put-in.

And so we found ourselves at the famous **L'Isere** River. site of a **recent** world championship. We were stand-



The Alpine rivers often descend between sheer rock cliffs.

ing on a small bridge overlooking the tail end of the world class slalom course, which bustled with would-be competitors making practice runs. Around us a festival atmosphere...lots of boats, colors and action. We were all smiles, ready to spend an incredible day on a beautiful river.

Then I noticed a solitary boater carrying her boat towards us. A girl...or



N.O.C. staffer Bob Beasley teaches the French to surf on the La Drance River.

a woman...I surmised, well-camouflaged by the usual gear.

"Bonjour." I announced confidently. "Parlez vous **Anglais?**" This was the full extent of my French.

"Bonjour" the reply. "Un peu."

And so we met Mary **Ann Agulhon**, sixth-ranked woman on the French Team. Junior Team Coach, paddler extraordinaire and a fibber. She did not just speak "un **peu**" English, she spoke lots of it, and very well.

We soon learned that Mary **Ann** was studying at the university level to be a coach and she was required to pass her exams in English. Off came her helmet and jacket and, then, to top things off, we discovered that we were **talking** rivers with a truly beautiful French girl.

To make an exclamation the French often blow air out from their puffed cheeks accompanied by a small shrug. It's a unique gesture, very

French. Insert one of these here!

We spoke with Mary Ann about **running** the L'Isere and made arrangements to meet her later. We wanted more local info, and besides. Beaz and I are falling hard. We figured she wanted to see if we came back from eighteen miles of juicy whitewater before she told us more.

We made a quick trip to the super-marche for more outrageous cheese and fresh *baquette* (bread). Fuel for the fires. before we hit the river. Hydro power is omnipresent in France; we put in below a dam that was dumping water big time.

We peeled out into the quick flowing water. Around the first bend the action started. Whitewater as far as I could see. The slalom course appeared and we jammed into an eddy to take a **look**. Then Beaz was off, smooth and powerful. **making** most all of the gates. I followed. just trying to catch the eddies, still my heart, and compre-

hend how unbelievably fast the **L'Isere** flowed.

Running 35 cubic meters per second, the gradient varied over the eighteen mile **run**, but for the most part, the river **ran** very much downhill. The slalom **course** drops about 80 feet per mile...heavy class four water reminiscent of the American west. Several rapids were more than three-quarters of a mile long. With such a perfect course. it is no wonder the French team is so good. Moves demanded power, accuracy, speed and style.

I discovered a huge hole just behind a downriver gate near the end of the course and **eventually** backender out. The water was very, very cold.

On we went, a veritable **white-water** sleigh ride for 25 kilometers. Without hustling we were done two and a half hours later. We sat by the side of the river, determined to fur in our mind the memory of **all** those rapids. the cloud wisped Alps and the

ancient Roman **bridges**.

The run on the **L'Isere** ended just 400 yards above a killer dam, but there was some flatwater and the raft companies had bases here, so the take-out would be hard to miss. Beaz had no trouble hitchhiking the shuttle, while I snoozed in the sun, **stalwartly** guarding our gear.

Soon we were back in Bourg, all smiles, in time to keep our date with Mary Ann. She located the local hostel for us, then led us to a sidewalk cafe. Satisfied that we had survived the **L'Isere**, she told us of another river in the area. It was called La Dron.

Mary Ann and several rafting teams were headed there in the **morning** to practice on some "really difficult water" in anticipation of a celebrity raft race. And we could tag along. How could we refuse?

La Dron

It stormed hard that night. The gray dawn found Beaz and I at the hostel choking down **corn** flakes and warm milk. The menu there rated a red circle with a slash mark. Eventually, we found the van. **Mary Ann**, and a dozen of stone-faced, macho French paddlers. These guys did not even acknowledge our presence.

They loaded two rafts onto a trailer and we headed down the **Isere**

valley towards the unlikely **sounding** town of Albertville. Off the main road, we wandered upwards into the Alps. Suddenly we found ourselves in busy flea market at the edge of Brides-Les-Bains, the aforementioned quaint little village with the roaring La Dron slicing right down its middle.

The rafters assaulted the **put-in** commando style and were gone before we even changed.

La Dron was not high volume, but it was steep, running at 1200 cfs with a gradient of 100-130 feet per mile. Again the put-in had something to do with a dam and a **hydro** plant. It was mellow for the **first** quarter mile below the dam but then things picked up quickly. By the time we reached the village things were intense and we were flying. We managed one last tiny eddy before we plunged through town. For a time we stared at the frothing water screaming by us, awed by its power and speed. Then we peeled out into the thick of it.

We blasted through a wicked **S turn** into town past two large must miss holes, then streaked under a couple of foot **bridges** and the mineral water spa and hotel. **All** of this was a blur. Next we were confronted with a large strainer, several more juicy holes and then the final bend that led to the edge of town. 400 yards with only four **microeddies** in two minutes or less.

Our hearts were pounding.

Beaz and I settled into the **remaining** five miles and discovered it **was** a straightforward gas. We careened **down**, around, and down again, on **continuous** water through a steep, **forested** gorge. **Finally** the gradient dropped off and I realized that I was going to **survive**.

Heavy construction equipment in the river signalled the take-out. The 1982 Winter Olympics are to held **nearby**...hence the flurry of road and **resort** building.

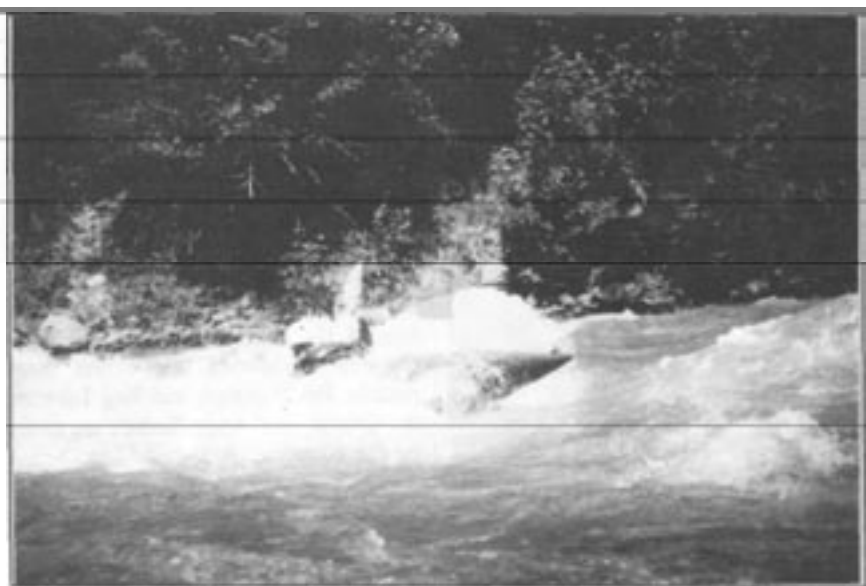
Ambience

We spent a beautiful night at the ski area at Val **d'Isere** just up the **road from** the La Dron. The altitude was high and the **trams** stretched on **into** the clouds. Although it was June they were still skiing at the highest **elevations**. But it was whitewater that **brought** us to France and we would not go home disappointed.

We paddled eleven classic French rivers and this was but the tip of the iceberg. We spotted other **primo** stretches of rapids in our travels, but because of time restraints we could **only** pause and drool. The people were **Friendly** and the food stupendous. I learned that it is so much better to uncork an excellent vintage at a **take-out** than to snap open the traditional American brew.

Travel in France is by car and **train**; the roads and schedules are excellent. And though the water levels in the southern Alps were low while we were **there**...and we found out later that the rivers back home were **juicin'**...this was **FRANCE**...and that, in itself, was fabulous.

And by the way. If you are fortunate enough to paddle France...and you decide to hike the three and **one-half** mile trail into the midway access point on the Verdun Gorge...dont lose your boat over the side. The vertical drop is in the thousands of feet. And when a boat takes that flight...it is called the Grand IYEEEEEE...but that's another story...



Bob Beasley challenges the course on France's L'Isere River.

Paddling the Frontier

A review of Wic Walker's guide to Pakistan

by Bob Gedekoh



*"Everyone has had the dream: a crowded party, everyone dressed to the nines, smiling and sharing jokes. And suddenly you are in the midst of it all, wearing not a stitch! Drop into the main street of a village in Kobistan, dressed in a red, white and blue **drysuit**, "Dry Fashion" lettered down the **left** sleeve, bright red helmet and matching neoprene spray skirt. The sensation, and the stares, are roughly the same."*

Wic Walker, introduction to Paddling the Frontier.

Admittedly more and more American boaters are broadening their horizons and seeking thrills in increasingly exotic locales. Still, not many will ever be adventurous and lucky enough to paddle in Newfoundland or Mexico or Bhutan. Wic Walker has paddled in all these places, and more, most recently focusing his attention on **Pakistan**... one of the world's great whitewater **frontiers**.

The results of Walker's explorations are summarized in Paddling the Frontier, A Guide to Pakistan's Whitewater, published this summer by Travel **Walji's**. Walker's guide will doubtlessly prove invaluable for those intrepid boaters who elect to explore the remote rivers in Pakistan. But it also makes interesting reading for those homebodies who like to pipe dream.

Paddling the Frontier is divided into three geographical sections; the Himalayas, the Hindu **Kush** and the **Karakoram**. Walker has supplemented his impressions of several rivers with information from others, most notably Jim **Burnham** and Reg Lake on the **Chitral**, and Andy Embick on rivers in the Northern Areas.

Walker acknowledges that most of the rivers in the book have been **run** only once...and that water levels vary tremendously throughout the year...and he appropriately urges caution in approaching the region. Walker



admits to having a few close calls, as reflected in his essay, "Flash Flood", excerpted here. The guidebook is dedicated to Dr. Mike Jones, an English paddler who perished on the Bradlu River at high water in **1978**, while attempting to rescue a teammate.

Walker states that there are still hundreds of kilometers of **first** descents left in Pakistan...many of them apparently class 5 and 6. But **tackling** these **runs** will take a lot of patience and timing.

Nor does he downplay the physical and cultural difficulties facing adventure travelers in this part of the world. Dealing with the complex and, sometimes, inscrutable bureaucracies of this ancient land apparently can be interesting...as reflected in his section entitled "Border Crossing". But Walker rightly perceives such incidents not so much as inconveniences, but as experiences to be savored, providing insight into the character of the Pakistani people.

Walker describes Pakistan as an odd hybrid of the "wild west", where a visitor "goes where he will and does what he has the nerve for", and a **reaucratic** state, where "paperwork is king and permits are required in multiple copies for the most ordinary actions". He suggests that an experienced outfitter, or at least a bilingual driver, can help cut through regulatory requirements and religious and cultural imperatives.

Walker **also** suggests that some areas of Pakistan are best left unexplored. For instance, one wilderness area of the **Indus** lies within a "tribal territory", which takes it beyond the writ of Pakistani law or protection. Here the **Pathan** tribesmen have "for centuries made a hobby and business of kidnapping Englishmen for ransom". Walker observes wisely that "Sitting ducks and **paddlers** have too much in common for this run".

Several appendices are included in the book to help paddlers exploring Pakistan. One deals with the climate, another lists additional reference **books**, a third deals with permits and regulations, while a fourth lists geographic names with their equivalent Urdu name. Since the Urdu alphabet is entirely different **from** our own,



Kunbar River, Kaghan Valley

Wic Walker photo

this appendix should prove useful to visitors frustrated by seemingly indecipherable **road** signs.

Concise descriptions delineate navigable stretches on each river; whitewater is classed using the international scale of I-VI. Unfortunately, information on flow and gauging of rivers is virtually non-existent in **Pakistan**.

Walker includes several essays to give **his** readers the flavor of travel in Pakistan. His description of an unlikely, yet intrepid, American explorer named Margarita **Dovert** is a real gem. (Excerpted here.) I hope that the author includes more of these essays in future editions.

The book is illustrated with both color and black and white photographs. Easy to read maps are included for each of the watersheds discussed.

Hopefully, this carefully written guidebook will stimulate others to carefully **continue** Wic Walker's efforts to open up Pakistan to whitewater enthusiasts. Anyone headed in that direction would do well to take a copy of this book.

Paddling the Frontier, **73** pages, available for **\$12.95 from** Wildwater Designs, **230** Penllyn Pike. **Penllyn**, Pa. **19422**. or **from** Travel Walji's, Inc., **51** Bank Street. **Stanford, Ct. 06901**.

FLASH FLOOD

(Excerpted from *Paddling the Frontier*
by Wic Walker)

River **Gods** are no more tolerant than their less conventional brethren. Scraping my boat down the shallow gravel bars on the wide, braided **Siran River**. I **welcomed** the **first**, pounding thunderstorm. The cool rain felt good in Pakistan's summer heat, and the little side streams that began **pumping** red and brown water into the clear main stream promised to speed up a twenty-six mile day.

Two hours later, thunderheads still chased each other along the ridgelines of the Black Mountains east of the **Indus River**. I stood 100 feet up a canyon wall on river left, **looking** almost straight down on an **unrunnable** rapid and explaining the nuances of whitewater sport to an animated group of villagers. The one English speaker was adamant: "We can not allow you to continue. It is too dangerous! And it becomes worse! And you do not have a permit. We can not allow you to kill yourself without a **permit**! You must return to the village."

As I reasonably countered each of **his** arguments with descriptions of what whitewater boats can do, the precautions we take, and the lack of laws requiring permits. I mentally did an inventory.

-I was boating on a rapidly rising river, a circumstance that had previously gotten me into more trouble than I would stand on two other **contingents**.

-I was paddling solo...in the Himalayan foothills. The nearest other whitewater boater was almost certainly in Kathmandu.

-I was **paddling** a river far **from** the **roads** where I had **been** able to scout, and invariably rivers save their ambushes for spots hidden from sight.

-My friend in the turban was absolutely right.

But some lessons we seem to relearn year after year. As I put in below the drop I had **been** **scouting** and ran down the next few hundred yards, the by now chocolate brown water gave off a powerful scent of earth, like dig-



ging in a garden, and splashes in the face were gritty between the teeth. Powerful boils kicked the boat around even in the eddies, and what had appeared to be clean wave **trains** from 100 feet above, concealed frightening **recirculating** holes. I noticed one such almost too late, jamming the boat hard to the **left**, **just** managing to cut through the corner. I got out with considerable relief on the left shore to carry around an **unrunnable** vertical drop, six or eight feet high, with boulders piled at its base blocking all possibility of navigation.

The carry was not much better than its alternative, and as I caught my breath on a ledge seventy feet above the river, I tried to calculate my options. Immediately below this drop the water became easier, for the short **distance** that would be seen. But then the river entered another steep-walled canyon; whether for yards or miles could not be determined from my vantage point. Everything hinged on whether the water was still **rising** or beginning to fall. If the former, going on was suicidal.

My contemplation of the canyon downstream was suddenly interrupted by a deepening pitch to the river's sound. Directly **below** me, the opaque brown flood was wvered by hundreds of logs, of all sizes from sticks to tree **trunks**. From as far upstream as I could see, they formed an endless chain, tumbling over the falls below and dis-

appearing in the backwash, eventually to reappear and reform their chain downstream. Obviously something had broken loose above, and as I watched the water level could be seen to rise. Within minutes the steep falls below were transformed into a huge pulsating wave, still carpeted by the seemingly endless supply of wood.

With a palpable sense of relief, I realized that I no longer had a decision to make. The paddling day was over, including the risks. The walking day was about to start.

When it is called trekking or **backpacking**, and it involves 40 pound backpacks, it is called a sport and many pay money to do it. When it involves a 40 pound boat, there is no name suitable for family reading. Fortunately, within minutes of cresting the ridgeline, I encountered a villager, who evinced only minor surprise at my sudden appearance and who insisted on helping carry the boat. A short game of charades soon established that I wanted no part of the flooded river, and that a Suzuki truck would be nice.

My new friend quickly hoisted the boat and hustled down the trail, directly away from any **road** shown on my map, and directly toward tribal territory. I followed along behind, carrying my paddle and wondering whether my wife would actually sell her new horse to pay a ransom. **How-**

ever, after a half hour we did emerge on a paved road, whereupon my panting companion reverted to civilization and demanded 500 rupees (about thirty dollars) for carrying the boat, union wages by any standards. Being less the rookie than I perhaps appeared, I emptied my pockets to reveal only 100 rupees in my possession. My guide cheerfully bowed to the inevitable and returned back toward the river, leaving me to one of the more unusual shuttle runs.

Postscript: News reports the following day revealed the toll on the Siran River that day to be one hotel, two shops, three bridges, three water mills, and, sadly, eight persons.

TRAVELER

(Excerpted from *Paddling the Frontier*, by Wic Walker)

"I have absolutely no idea what will happen today, or where I will wind up tonight. That's what I love about this."
...Margarita Doherty

Margarita Doherty, of Glen Echo, Maryland, is seventy-seven years old, white-haired and fit, and embarrassing. She makes me feel like the perfect gringo tourist, with my big red jeep, boat on top, cameras and bags of dry clothes and junk food. Margarita, in Pakistani clothing (which she describes as like wearing a nightgown over your pajamas) and with a single beat-up suitcase, is making her way from Gilgit, gateway to the Karakoram, to Peshawar, on the Afghan frontier and center for the guerilla war against the Russians. She travels exclusively on the "Flying Coaches", fantastically decorated busses that ply from town to town throughout Pakistan, stopping at every hamlet where their brakes work.

We meet over breakfast in a lodge at Miandam, 6000 feet up in the hills of Swat. A retired geographer from American University, she now rambles the ares she once studied. Retirement income is supplemented by occasional magazine articles about obscure development projects for obscure journals. Margarita explains that she would not have minded going to



Europe like everyone else, but at her age she could not talk any of her friends into going to ski the Dolomites.

As we coast down the hill in my decadent jeep to deposit her at the first bus stop on the main Swat Road, I gently bring up the fact that her destination, Peshawar, is one of the roughest towns I have ever seen. The traditional gateway to the Khyber Pass, its bazaars have been famous smugglers' hangouts for centuries. Today, guns, drugs, and Russian refrigerators are common currency; long-bearded Pathan tribesmen from both sides of the border stalk the narrow alleys; bombs explode at more than one per week.

Margarita acknowledges that she has heard much the same before,

leaving me with the impression that the wild-west atmosphere may be exactly why she is going there. She points out that there are a great many places where she, as an inoffensive little old lady, can go that I never would. And she states that she doubts it will be rougher than North Yemen, across which she hitchhiked last year. I keep the rest of my advice to myself.

AWA Board of Directors election

Bill Baker
Littleton, CO

Since taking up this sport (obsession?), kayaking has given me more pleasure than I can say. My fondest memories seem to revolve around big rivers, steep creeks, hot coffee, cold beer, all-night drives, after-work dashes, basting in the desert sun on the Colorado, and freezing in the tumbling waters of the Animas while dropping out of the clouds at ten thousand feet. The river has shown me the best of times, the worst of times, exhilaration, solitude, beauty, and fury; but still it welcomes me as a friend.

I feel a duty of sorts to return something to the river. For four years I have served on the board of the Colorado White Water Association, currently as president. I take my turn leading beginner trips, I'm current in first aid and CPR, and I teach a class in white water rescue. I will soon be conservation director of the CWWA, and I look forward to working on national issues on the board of the AWA.

It is imperative that the paddling community maintain vigilance in protecting our rivers, and our access to them. We face formidable opposition, especially in the areas of safety, river management, and conservation. But with our enthusiasm, organization, and diligence, we can succeed politically, and cherish these beautiful rivers for a long time to come.



Voting procedure

A slate of notable candidates fill the ballot for approval as members of the American Whitewater Board of Directors.

This year's election for directors will follow a new format. As the AWA constitution does not specify a set number of directors permitted to hold office, members are asked to simply approve or disapprove of each candidate. Every nomination that receives an affirmative vote on 50% of the ballots received will be introduced to the Board.

The new procedure has been adopted to allow all worthy candidates to enter the Board, regardless of the number of nominations made for that particular year.

Members are encouraged to complete the mail the attached ballot by December 31, 1989.

Pope Barrow
Washington, D.C.

As a board member since 1986 (and even without official status before that) I have tried to involve AWA more deeply in river conservation. The response from other members of the Board and from the general membership has been tremendously exciting. A number of AWA members have become experts in handling hydroelectric projects. Through litigation, AWA has stalled, defeated, or improved on numerous hydropower projects throughout the nation. Our volunteer members developed and published a comprehensive Nationwide Inventory of Whitewater Rivers to help State and Federal agencies to identify rivers qualified for protection. Our Hydromania Award focused a glare of negative publicity on disastrous dam proposals on the North Fork of the Payette in Idaho and on Klamath in Oregon. We instituted River Watch,

an early warning system to alert boaters (and others) of new hydroelectric proposals. We are continuing to educate other conservation organizations about the importance and scarcity of whitewater. Most of this has been funded by Gauley Festival profits and by grants from Patagonia, R.E.I. and individual contributors. A lot still remains to be done. If reelected, I would work even harder to cooperate with other conservation organizations and to improve AWA's river conservation efforts, especially by developing and promoting alternatives to the wild and scenic rivers system to permanently protect important whitewater resources from all forms of river abuse.

Photo taken at the Sunbeam Dam site on the South Fork of the Payette River in Idaho. (After plugging the river for 24 years, Sunbeam Dam was dynamited anonymously in 1934.)



Jack Hession Anchorage, AK

Kayaking and Rafting
since 1968

My platform is:

Con-
servation of whitewa-
ter rivers as AWA's
top priority.

Sup-
port for the AWA's
Nationwide Whitewa-
ter Inventory, River
Watch and participa-
tion in FERC licens-
ing and relicensing
procedures.

Pro-
mote more whitewater rivers for addition to the National Wild
and Scenic Rivers System. Strengthen the Wild and Scenic
Act, e.g. eliminate weak provisions for Alaskan units of the
system.

Seek addition of whitewater rivers to state
river systems. Assist AWA affiliates working for strong state
laws; strengthen existing systems where inadequate to fully
protect free-flowing rivers.

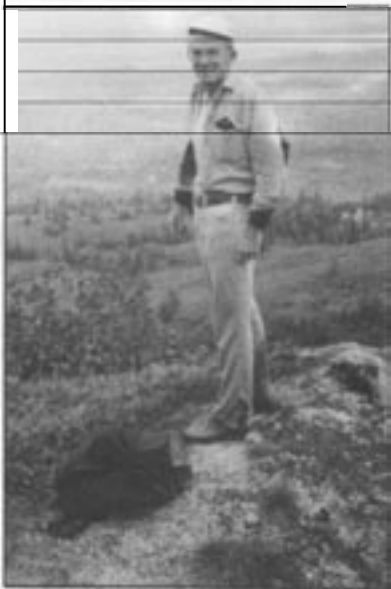
In river management plans where permit
systems are necessary, AWA should endorse a 50 percent
private boaters/50 percent commercial allocation of permits.
AWA should also urge river management agencies to revise
existing allocations that give the lion's share of permits to
commercial interests, e.g., on the Colorado in Grand Canyon
National Park.

Assist boating organizations and river conser-
vation groups in other countries with their own national
whitewater inventories. At the request of such groups, assist
in the environmental, engineering and economic evaluation,
of hydropower projects, especially mega-projects conceived
by the international dam building industry, World Bank, et. al.

Phyllis Horowitz Phoenicia, NY

For those of you who don't know any more
about me than perhaps seeing my name listed among the
other AWA Directors each issue, let me introduce myself and
give you a little background. I've been kayaking for about six
years now; and although you probably won't find me dabbling
in overly hairy waters, I thoroughly enjoy the beauty, adrenal-
ine and politics of whitewater paddling. Ever since I threw my
first duffek, I've been involved with off-the-river aspects of
the sport as the Editor of the Kayak and Canoe Club of New
York's Newsletter and also as their Slalom Race Chairperson
for the past three years.

As the river conservation movement grew
increasingly activist during recent years, I knew it was my
responsibility as a paddler to get involved. But not being
personally inclined either toward staying awake during long
legislative and committee meetings or delving through stacks



of papers and filings, what should I do? I didn't believe that
writing the occasional letter or initiating concerned phone
calls expressed the level of concern I felt about the issues at
hand.

Just about that time, back in early 1987, I was
both exceedingly relieved and flattered to receive a call from
Narge Cline inquiring how I might translate some of the
advertising fundraising I had been doing for KCCNY into
positive action for the AWA and inviting me to run for a
Director's slot. That was the answer! By generating adver-
tising revenue and making the AWA Journal more self-
sufficient, I'd be freeing up money for use by the dambusters!
So I agreed, was elected, and the rest is history.

Armed with Chris Koll's dynamically revamped
Journal, I was able to go out into the vast community of
potential whitewater advertisers and build a family of regular
backers from zero to what you see today in the pages of this
issue. The enthusiastic support we received on our efforts
enabled me then to develop and stock the Gauley Festival
Marketplace and Auction, further feeding the AWA coffers.
Increased awareness and publicity of our organization and
its purpose resulting from these activities eventually put me
in a position to help out a bit with AWA's membership drive.

It's all been fun and I hope you want me to
continue the work I've been doing for AWA. Thanks for
letting me be useful!

Chris Koll Fabius, NY

Heck, I can't think of any special reason why members
should vote for me as a director. I've worked as the editor of
American Whitewater (the best semi-professional whitewa-
ter magazine in the world) for three years and now I'm
serving as the journal's publisher. All told, I put in between 60
to 120 hours of volunteer work an issue. And I've also helped
organize the Gauley Festival for the past four years and
worked on conservation issues up here in New York since
1984. But the bottom line is--I'll go on doing the same things
whether you vote for me or not.

The truth of the matter is that the title "Director" has
such a respectable ring to it. My mother has always consid-
ered this whitewater thing I'm involved with on the same level
as Satanic worship. Being named a director might make my
involvement easier for her to bear.

Be an AWA Coordinator

AWA to expand regional base

The AWA is looking for a few good men and women to serve as **white-water** activists in their local areas. In coming months, "AWA Coordinators" will be appointed to assert private paddlers' interests in state and local whitewater preservation and access issues.

The AWA plans to support each coordinator with reimbursement for reasonable expenses, putting the coordinator in touch with experienced river activists, and providing model documents. The concept is outlined below. If you would like a to take a crack at your local or regional river "developers," please call: Mac Thornton, AWA Vice-president (202) 543-4923, Risa Shimoda Cailaway, AWA Executive Director (704) 483-5049 (h+w), or Pope Barrow, AWA Conservation Chairman (202) 546-3766 (h).

1. The Goal:

The interests of private whitewater paddlers needs to be effectively asserted in all river preservation and access issues. AWA is attempting to do this by recruiting river activists, and giving them a job which is flexibly designed to be doable and not overwhelming.

2. The Concept:

We are establishing a network of AWA COORDINATORS, on either the regional, state, or issue levels. The geographical boundaries of each Coordinator's area are flexible, for example:

AWA Midwest Coordinator (for a region)

AWA Northern California Coordinator (for a state, or state segment)

AWA North Fork Payette Coordinator (for a specific river)

Our goal is to cover all the whitewater in the USA, area by area. The smaller the area the better, to enable that coordinator to concentrate on a smaller number of issues.

3. What the AWA Needs from Coordinators

The primary tasks are things the AWA needs the coordinator to commit to do. If he or she has additional time and energy, the AWA would also appreciate help with the secondary tasks.

a. Primary tasks

1. Keep up on issues affecting whitewater in your area, especially access and conservation issues,

2. Represent the interests of private **whitewater** paddlers in those issue debates, by phone, letters, etc., and

3. Write timely articles for American Whitewater on those issues, arrange for someone else to write the articles, or call someone else in the AWA (such as one of us) to enable us to write the articles.

b. Secondary tasks

1. Maintain contact with the major whitewater clubs and other conservation organizations in the area (networking),

2. Help increase AWA membership, and

3. Help refine the AWA National Inventory of **Whitewater Rivers** (checking its accuracy, adding or deleting rivers).

4. What the AWA Will Do for Coordinators

Being an AWA Coordinator is a two-way street. AWA will:

a. Provide national publicity and a national platform for your local river battles,

b. Put you in contact with experts on the river issue you are facing, and those people who have faced similar issues in the past, and learned how to evaluate alternative courses of action,

c. On request, provide you with examples of documents (letters, petitions, etc.) which have worked for others in similar situations (for example, hydro licensing and relicensing, Wild and Scenic petitions, Freedom of Information Act requests, letters to the Army Corps and other Federal and state regulatory agencies, and letters on access rights, flood control studies, etc.), and

d. Using our Washington, D.C. contacts, help you get Congressional attention to your issue.

5. Relation of the Coordinators to AWA Board and Officers

The chief responsibility of the AWA Vice President is to attend to the needs of the AWA Coordinators, as is one of the chief responsibilities of the Executive Director and the Conservation Chairman. However, the AWA remains an informal affiliation of volunteers. Feel free to contact any of the AWA Board Members, or anyone else in the organization who can help.

6. Miscellaneous Points

a. Send copies of all documents you generate to the Executive Director.

b. Use good judgement in representing the AWA. If private boaters are split on an issue, use caution. Also, generally it is better not to criticize others who have goals similar to ours.

c. Reasonable expenses will be covered up to a budgeted amount, for example, phone bills, copying costs, and postage. Keep your phone bills, receipts and cancelled checks, and submit them with your claim. Of course, any expense which is not reimbursed is tax deductible.

d. An announcement will be put in American Whitewater regarding every coordinator appointed, his or her background, etc.

"Hydro Fairness Act" spells trouble

In a move that spells trouble for whitewater boating, river wildlife, energy conservation and environmental concerns, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee has unanimously approved the so-called "Hydroelectric Fairness Act of 1989 (Senate Bill 635)". As reported in the last issue of American Whitewater, this law is not really "fair" at all. Rather, it enlarges a special exemption from the Federal Power Act for certain hydro operators whose dams were built before 1935. An estimated 350 dams are at issue across the country.

Under the current law, these privileged old dam operators can be removed if somebody else applies for a Federal Dam Licence and has a better plan for overall use of the stream. In the process, the old dam operator can be forced to meet the modern Federal environmental and recreational requirements, or else convey the project to somebody who will. The effect of this bill is to immunize old dam owners forever from the rigors of this nettlesome **competition**, the environmental requirements and the recreation access policies.

By the time you read this, the "Hydro Fairness" bill will probably already have passed the full Senate. Action will be pending in the House of Representatives, where the bill is called the "Public Interest Hydroelectric Li-

censing Act of 1989"—H.R. 1069. (Clearly George Orwell is living in the basement of the Capitol making up names for these bills.)

Although some of you may have written your Senators on this...remember what they did at election time...it is IMPERATIVE now that paddlers make their views known in the House. Reported they are "more skeptical" about this idea than the Senate. However, the responsible people in the House need to know this Bill is NOT FAIR.

Write that:

1. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) should RE-TAIN its present authority to license pre-1935 dams, and, in doing so, should give "equal consideration" to the "protection of recreational opportunities and the preservation of other aspects of environmental quality".

2. You OPPOSE giving pre-1935 owners a permanent exemption from standard Federal environmental, recreational and energy conservation policies in the operation of pre-1935 dams.

3. The proposed exemption of H.R. 1069 GOES TOO FAR. At most, Congress should give incumbent pre-1935 owners ONLY the same "slight preference" that all other dam owners now have in competitive relicense pro-

ceedings.

Write to:

1. The Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Honorable John Dingell, 2125 Rayburn Building, Washington, D.C. 20515 or telephone the staff in charge, David Finegan, at

202-225-2927

2. The Chairman of the Subcommittee on Energy and Power, Honorable Phillip R. Sharp, U.S. House of Representatives, 331 House Annex II, Washington, D.C. 20515 or telephone the staff person in charge, Richard Lehfelt, 202-226-2500.

Tubers turn town upside down

"I've made a million dollars since I started this," says Harry Jameson.

Mr. Jameson is the founder, president and 100 percent stockholder of The Town Tinker Tube Rental in Phoenicia, a hamlet in the town of Shandaken in the Catskills. The inner tubes that he rents carry people down the Esopus River.

His success as the whitewater tube rental king of the Catskills is an entrepreneurial triumph but a decidedly mixed blessing for Phoenicia, a community of about 200 full-time residents.

But when there is good rainfall, or the engineers are releasing water from the Schoharie Reservoir above town, the effect on whitewater tubing fans is roughly the same as the cry of "Surf's Up" to surfers. The tubers pour into town, 2,000 or 3,000 on any given weekend, more on holidays like the Fourth of July.

"It's like Times Square," laments Michael O'Malley, a six-year summer resident who is in his 50s and who comes for the hiking and the camping and the glimpses of deer and black bear and wild turkey.

But now there are crowds, traffic jams, congestion and loud live music.

Mr. Jameson has been in the tube rental business for 10 years. He started with 100 inner tubes and a one-horse Sears air compressor to blow them up—an investment of \$620.35, he recalls. He worked out of a dilapidated barn he shored up with the original goal of being the town handyman. The tube rentals were an afterthought. Now, he says, "It has blossomed into an industry."

Indeed, Mr. Jameson does \$30,000 a year in advertising, has a score of employees and rents 200 to 300 tubes on weekdays

and 1,000 and more on weekend days. At \$7 to \$10 a day each, plus concessions like T-shirts and life jackets, business is good.

He runs three shuttle buses to ferry his customers upstream and is on the board of the Catskill Mountain Railroad, a tourist train that runs several miles along the Esopus. These days it car-

ries mostly tubers.

But, just as every Hertz spawns its Avis, competition has appeared. "At one time there were eight tube rentals in this town," Mr. Jameson said. There are now only three, and Town Tinker does 90 percent of the business, but competition is tense. Roadside barkers hustle tubers into competing lots; rock bands have been em-

ployed to lure customers and competition is not always friendly.

Things were relatively calm, Mr. O'Malley says, when Town Tinker was pretty much the only game in town. "But all of a sudden now you get barkers, you get hollering, you get people glaring at each other, you get goofy signs and loud music."

The Shandaken Town

Supervisor, R. Wayne Gutmann, says that Mr. Jameson tries to respond to complaints, but that the crowds of young tubers threaten to turn the area into "a Coney Island." Despite the boost to the economy, he says, tubing is "selling the environment down the river."

Nagara Japan's final free flowing river

Boaters defend last Japanese whitewater

In an unusual display of environmental activism earlier this year hundreds of Japanese kayakers joined a 3-day demonstration floating down the Nagara River, Japan's last free-flowing river, protesting a massive water project.

The flotilla began with only 20 kayaks on the Upper Nagara in Gifu Prefecture, southeast Japan, but by the second day 400 participants had joined in. The flotilla was part of a larger gathering by ecologists, writers, and community activists fighting to stop the water project.

According to Noda Tomosuke, leader of Japan's recent kayaking boom, "There are 200-300 rivers in Japan with enough flow for kayaks, but the Nagara is the only one left without a dam. For kayakers this is our last hope." Opposition is growing although the project has been under construction for over a year. It involves building a 661-meter long dam across the river at a point 5.4 kilometers

upstream from the mouth.

Opposition to the project began many years ago with a mammoth lawsuit involving 26,000 plaintiffs, mostly from fishing cooperatives in the area, but by 1988 the government had largely neutralized the fishing opposition by incorporating gates into the barrier to allow the upstream movement of the Ayu trout—a highly prized Japanese fish.

The Ayu trout float upstream with the tide, however, and fish experts charge that they will not jump the government-designed fish ladders. The river is also home to a saltwater Salmon species called Satsuki masu and 60 other species of fish, many of which end up in sushi bars all over Japan. The government proposes to replace the lost fishery with hatchery-bred substitutes, but Japanese sushi connoisseurs complain that hatchery fish taste bad.

Environmental groups, scientists, and kayakers have

considerably less political clout in Japan than in the United States, but since last year they have stepped up their campaign for the Nagara. It has become a national symbol of Japan's obsession with overdeveloping its river systems.

Kayakers in Japan are not known for their political activism, but in this case they printed and distributed a poster showing a kayak paddle raised in a clenched, defiant fist. The poster has become an instant collectors item in art galleries throughout Japan. According to Tomosuke, "Most people in Japan take it for granted that their rivers are useless, stinking cesspools. If we don't stop this project, people will begin to treat this river like all the others—just another sewer."

Tomosuke urged kayakers to stop the Nagara project and then concentrate on tearing down the concrete that chokes every other river in the country.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

If you want to help, write the Ministry of Construction and demand an end to the project. Address your letter to: Ministry of Construction, 1-3 Kasumigaseki, 2 Chome, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Amano Reiko, 564 Osakashi, Yodogawa-ku, Nishi Mikuni 4-3-19-401, Osaka, Japan.

Protection for Black?

The New York DEC is studying a recommendation to list practically the entire length of the Black River as a wild, scenic and recreational river.

In enacted, the proposal would halt all planned hydro development on the much-assailed river.

The AWA has led the battle against hydro on the Black for the past five years.

Russia cont.

style of raft I have ever paddled. They are faster and more responsive to current than our designs, and since they are equipped with thigh straps, you can paddle them like a C-1, even utilizing the cross-draw.

CHANGING TIMES

When I look back on the experience, I believe that we achieved a mutual degree of understanding and affection. We have much in common. Both Americans and Soviets live in large countries with plenty of wide open spaces.

They admire our playfulness, free spirit, love of adventure and wild

places, and can identify with it. For many American boaters, paddling is a lifestyle or a way to escape the pressures and frustrations of day to day life. I believe Soviet boaters enjoy river running because it is one time when they can experience **freedom** and control their own destinies. When on the river they are removed from the considerable restrictions placed on their lives. These moments are precious to them.

The Soviets sincerely want peace and feel it is a mutual challenge to influence our governments to secure it. But they feel that they have less of an impact on their government than we have on **ours**, on issues ranging from

environmental concerns to arms **control**. They **are** not optimistic about Gorbachev, glasnost or perestroika, and they have a wait ~~and~~ see attitude regarding improvements in living and working conditions in their country.

But it seems the "times they are a' changing" in the Soviet Union. They can greet outsiders openly, and are encouraging tourism to boost their economy. An important **byproduct** will be the tearing down of old stereotypes and misconceptions.

I know that I **will** return to the Soviet Union; it is a fascinating, diverse country and our journey there was but a tantalizing appetizer.

And hopefully **Altai '89** will

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be but the **first** of many International Peace camps. Next spring the U.S. may **host** the event at the **Nantahala** Outdoor Center in North Carolina, providing enough financial support can be generated. If so, it **will** offer a unique opportunity to meet some remarkable people, participate in some exciting competition and have an unbelievably good time.

Chuya Race Results

Overall Finish

1. Team **Gorky (USSR)**

2. New **Zealand**

3. Great Britain

Top **U.S. Finishes**

8. Smoky Mountain

11. **Amazonkis**

Amazonki Highlights

5. Slalom kayak: Susan Norman

5. Slalom 2 man cat: Julie Munger and Kelly **Kalafatic**

11. **Slalom**, 4 man cat: Julie **Munger**, Kelly **Kalafatic**, Arlene Bums and Nancy **McCluskey**

12. Slalom, oar-paddlercraft: Chris **Hinckle**, Mary **Tritt**, **Spark Mintor**, **M.A. Jones**, Renee Goddard

8. Search and Rescue Competition: whole team

30. **Downriver Orienteering**: whole team



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The lure of a kayak

I should have foreseen a potential for danger when friends referred to my new boat as "the rainbow trout."

With a metal-flake finish of green, red and blue spread over its sleek lines. I could appreciate the comparison. But never in my wildest dreams did I imagine the horrible consequences of paddling a kayak that bore a resemblance to a fish...

By New York standards, it was a mild day for late September. By 10 am., the morning sun had melted the thick layer of frost from my multicolored boat and the kayak glittered in its bright light.

By noon I figured the Black River would melt down to a slush so that I could get through the rapids.

It was my first time out on the Black that fall after spending the previous two weeks on the Gauley. And while I realized the West Virginia climate would have been more temperate, ten days of paddling with Southern boaters was all I could stomach. One day I caught myself saying, "Whale, ah cain't rahtly tale thuñ lawn through thet draw"--and I knew it tom, I mean time, to head north.

It was quite nearly a fatal error.

Save the flaming foliage, the Black appeared unchanged from the last time I had run the river back in August. But I hadn't counted what lurked beneath the surface of the water.

I approached the waterfall with typical insouciance. Lining up on the middle roostertail, I paddled strongly forward, cleared the lip, then hipped back as my boat tilted down the 15-foot drop.

Wham! Midway down the drop, a 30-pound salmon, leaping from the pool below, struck me squarely in the chest. Wham! Bam! Two of his brethren followed in rapid succession, rendering me senseless before I struck the water.

The multiple impacts blew my boof, and the boil at the bottom of the

falls sucked me back into the hydraulic. As I tumbled in the hole, I became aware of an additional presence. Hundreds of salmon had joined me in the hydraulic and were rubbing and bumping against my kayak, pummeling me in the process. Clouds of milt erupted from the frenzied fish, lending a new meaning to the term "white water."

Despite my dazed state, I came to the realization: my kayak represented a salmon's idea of one Hot Mama.

Somehow, I was spit out the bottom of the hole. I dragged myself up on a downstream rock, caught the loop of my boat, and tried to hoist it up with me.

No go.

Down through the water, I could see three massive Chinook, their large hook jaws locked on the opposite loop, attempting to pull the boat back for their personal pleasure. A three-minute tug-of-war ensued before I finally wrested the kayak from their grasp. As I emptied the kayak, I could see a look of contempt in the fish's eyes—"Teaser!"

Even though I was safely out of the water, the severity of my plight was undiminished. My tiny rocky perch was surrounded by water that seethed with salmon.

It was a scene reminiscent of Hitchcock's "The Birds"—except the birds had fins. Every couple of seconds, a salmon would leap onto the rock, thrash its way to my kayak, its tail flopping and gills gasping, and plant a lipless kiss on the nose of my boat before I'd kick it back into the stream.

Then the fish attempted another tactic. One broke the surface near the rock holding a rose in its jaw. After I shook my head "no", he returned moments later--this time waving a twenty dollar bill in its mouth.

Frankly, I feared for my life--not to speak of my virtue. No way was I going to paddle the twenty yards to shore. I was a hostage. But, what to do?

I tried to scare the fish away

by slapping the water with my paddle. But that simply attracted a greater crowd of salmon, rolling on the surface as if to say, "Yes...beat me! Beat me!"

Then I tried to devise a salmon repellent. I stripped off my neoprene booties and polypro and hurled them in the water. The residue left a ring around the river, but the salmon were undeterred.

At last, along the banks, an army of people suddenly appeared. Saved! "Help, help!" I shouted above the roar of the water.

But instead of the anticipated throw rope, the newcomers quickly unlimbered a veritable forest of fishing poles and in seconds, I was being pelted with a barrage of weighted treble hooks hissing down from the sky like hail.

In desperation, I searched down to the bottom of my drybag, looking for some sort of weapon, some form of salvation. All I found was a book, a collection of essays by Sarte. It wasn't mine, of course, I had plucked it out of a dumpster somewhere and kept it thinking I could use the pages to start campfires on the Gauley trip.

Numb, I sat on the rock, flipped open the book, and mumbled a few words. Come to think of it, it must have looked like I was reading to my kayak.

The frenzied splashing around the rock suddenly ceased. I looked up. The water was as smooth as oil. Not a ripple. The salmon had vanished.

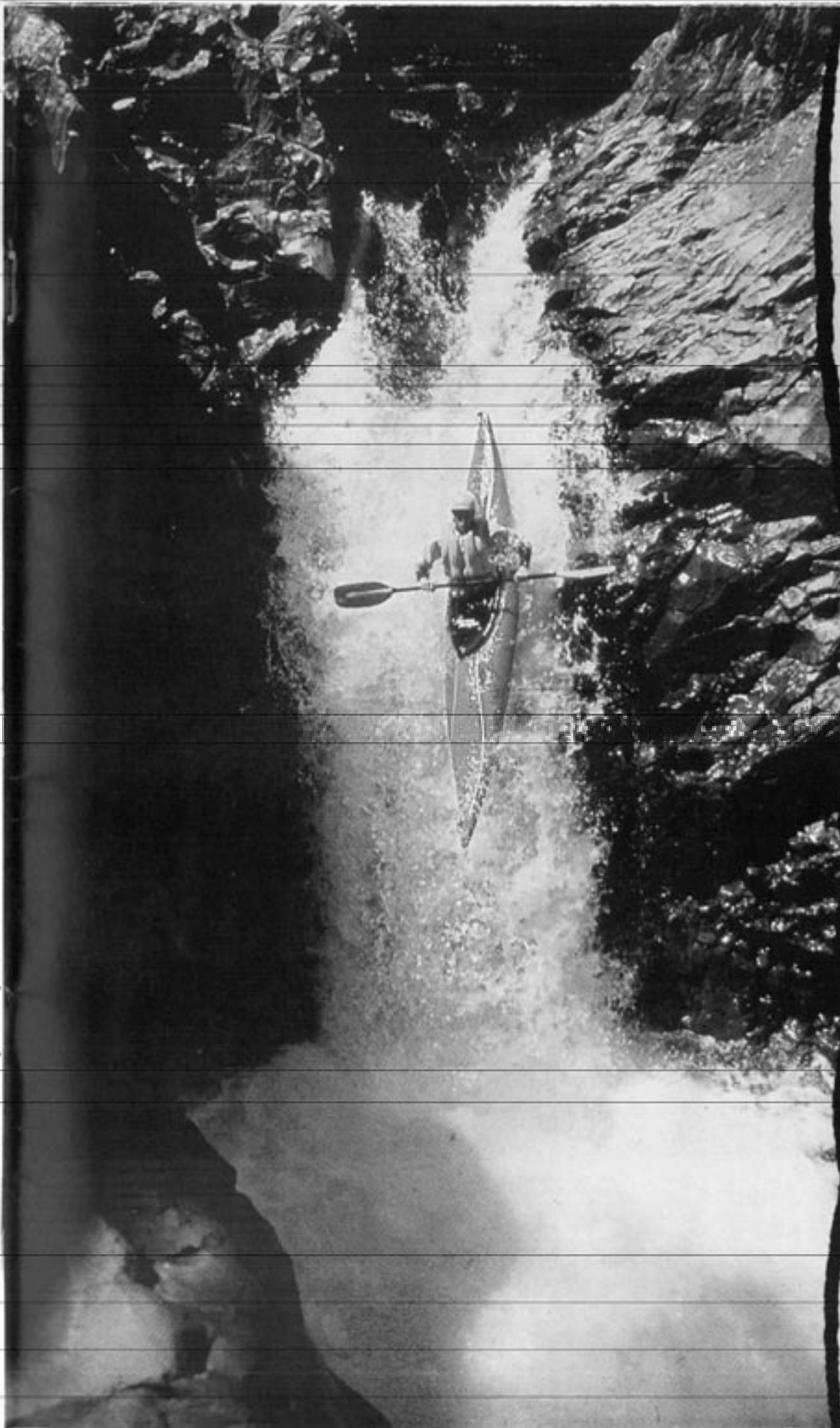
Nothing like the prospect of an educated female to frighten away a school of fish...or a pack of wolves.

I had to sell the rainbow trout, of course. After that episode, there wasn't a boater who would touch it, but I still managed to bargain for twice the original price I paid New Wave.

I mounted a treble hook to the tail and sold it as a lure to a fisherman geek.

It's probably trolling around Lake Ontario right now.

By Gary Carlson,
who is still green around the gills.



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me
to
the
river...
drop
me
in
the
water...

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